

Iran rebels say Tehran planning attack

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Iranian resistance group, Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, on Sunday warned of an imminent attack by the Iranian regime on the Mujahadeen's bases in Iraq. A Mujahadeen statement said Iran was preparing for a "large-scale offensive" on Iraq on several fronts. It said the attack will target the bases of the Iranian resistance and parts of Iraqi territory. The statement said that large contingents of forces affiliated with Pasdaran (the Revolutionary Guards Corps) were amassed along the Iran-Iraq frontier in the Qasr Eshrin region. "The operation's objective is to attack the bases of the Iranian resistance and to occupy parts of Iraqi territory," the statement said. The statement, issued by the office of the Mujahadeen in Baghdad, called on the United Nations Security Council to take effective measures against what it termed as "terrorist dictatorships" pointing to the Iranian regime's "recurrent violations of international law."

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Senate move expected today for full Jordan debt write-off

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two key members of the U.S. Senate are today expected to present a bill to the Senate under which Washington could write off \$488 million of Jordan's official debts, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Sunday.

The move, by Senator Mitch McConnell (Republican-Kentucky) and Senator Patrick Leahy (Democrat-Vermont), comes after a House of Representatives subcommittee slashed to \$50 million an administration request for an outlay of \$275 million to write off the Jordanian debts.

In technical terms, a \$275 million outlay would enable the administration to write off up to \$488 million; the \$50 million approved by the House subcommittee would allow a write-off up to \$100 million.

The slashing of the amount by the House subcommittee drew severe criticism from Jordanian officials and Parliament members.

Mr. Kabariti told the Jor-

dan Times on Sunday that the new measure would appropriate the full \$275 million now, "but will actually obligate \$50 million for fiscal 1995, with the remaining \$225 million to be spent in fiscal 1996."

The foreign minister said the move was agreed upon among U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Mr. McConnell, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Mr. Leahy, the ranking Democrat in the Senate, Thursday while the secretary of state was in Israel.

It was believed that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin briefed His Majesty King Hussein on the move when he paid a previously unannounced visit to Aqaba late Thursday after a meeting with Mr. Christopher in Tel Aviv.

Mr. Kabariti said the measure would be presented in the form of addition to a Department of Defense supplemental bill now before Senate.

"If the McConnell-Leahy amendment is adopted by the full 100-member Senate with-

out changes, and if the full supplemental spending bill is passed by the Senate on Thursday, the next step would be for the House and Senate to go into a conference session in approximately two weeks' time," the foreign minister said.

"Conference" sessions bring together key appropriations from the House and Senate to reconcile their respective versions of various bills, in this case the Department of Defense supplemental spending bill.

In technical terms, the House version of the Department of Defense supplemental spending bill makes no reference to debt relief for Jordan. As such, the Senate version, if it includes the McConnell-Leahy amendment, will have to be reconciled with the House version.

Members of the House of Representatives of Senate meeting in the conference "will also have to agree the level at which Congress will fund the administration's request for debt relief for Jordan," said the foreign minister.

The Clinton administration agreed last year to write off \$702 million in Jordan's official debts to Washington. The write-off was to come in three tranches — fiscal years 1994, 1995 and 1996 (Jordan owes the U.S. another \$300 million, but that amount is not eligible to be cancelled under parameters applied by the United States).

In September, the two countries signed an agreement under which the U.S. agreed to write off up to \$220 million in the first tranche. Funds for that write-off came in the form of a supplemental spending bill worth \$99 million. The actual write-off, after a process known as "scoring" — by the Office of Management and Budget that takes into consideration outstanding and accumulating interest — was \$194 million.

"The \$702 million is not a definite figure; it could go up or go down by a few million when the actual write-offs are made depending on the formula used for scoring," said a source familiar with American budget workings.

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Kabariti meets Saudi diplomat

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti on Sunday received Saudi Charge D'Affaires in Amman Mohammad Al Basam and discussed with him issues related to regional economic plans and arrangements to hold an international economic conference in Amman in October. The minister lauded the positive role played by the Saudi Development Fund in supporting development projects in Jordan and expressed hopes that there would be an active Saudi participation in regional programmes, particularly the Amman conference.

Talks with Sahaf

Mr. Kabariti on Sunday also received his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al Sahaf and exchanged with him views on issues listed on the agenda of the U.N. Security Council.

Mr. Sahaf briefed Mr. Kabariti on the outcome of visits he paid to Qatar and Oman recently.

Mr. Kabariti stressed the importance of seeking to find ways to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people in international and Arab arenas.

Swiss proposal

Mr. Kabariti also received a message from Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa outlining the outcome of the Egyptian-American talks which took place during a visit to Cairo by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The message was delivered by Egyptian Ambassador in Amman Ibrahim Hamdi.

Egyptian message

The minister also received a message from Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa outlining the outcome of the Egyptian-American talks which took place during a visit to Cairo by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Canadian message

Mr. Kabariti also received a message from his Canadian counterpart related to Canada's support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

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Prince Hassan, Peres discuss joint water project proposal

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Israel on Sunday discussed water projects included in their Oct. 26 peace treaty with a view to coordinating positions ahead of a meeting in Germany on financing for the projects, official sources said.

The discussions, which also included a review of the developments since the peace treaty was signed, were held between His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who paid a three-hour visit to Amman three days after His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin met in Aqaba.

According to the sources and reports in the Israeli press, the central theme for Sunday's talks at the Al Hashemiyeh Palace was plans to ensure that Jordan gets its share of water from the Yarmouk and Jordan rivers as stipulated in the peace treaty.

The plans, which include the building of dams and a desalination plant, are expected to cost up to \$400 million. The proposed facilities and detailed seasonal arrangements governing the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers would make available to Jordan an additional quantity of 215 million cubic metres of water every year. At present, the Kingdom is getting around 110 million cubic metres to 120 million cubic metres a year.

Israeli sources, quoted in a report carried by the Jerusalem Post on Sunday, said Prince Hassan and Mr. Peres were to discuss a joint proposal for dam construction that they will present to Germany in a meeting in Bonn this week.

Sources in Amman confirmed that the Crown Prince and Mr. Peres were to meet with Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Bonn on Wednesday.

An Israeli embassy spokesman said Jordanian-Israeli

"coordination on water projects and economic issues" were the key topic in the meeting between the Crown Prince and Mr. Peres.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the Crown Prince's talks with Mr. Peres came on the sidelines of a Socialist International delegation's meeting in Amman (see separate story).

It said the Crown Prince and the Israeli foreign minister discussed "prospects for moving from the stage of peace-making to peace-building and ways to meet the needs of the current stage in terms of international cooperation so as to carry out Jordanian development projects that would benefit citizens as achievements of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty."

The Crown Prince and Mr. Peres discussed Europe's role in implementing the peace treaty and in establishing a just and lasting comprehen-

sion of the peace treaty.

The treaty signals a new determination to pool and distribute our resources in a partnership of equals. We seek to build a new world, to create new conditions, under which all our peoples will enjoy the fruits of peace.

The means to that end must surely be cooperation. One of the treaty's more forward-looking provisions is its commitment to the creation of a conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME). This entails the adoption of a regional forum, loosely based on the CSCE model that has developed in Europe from the Helsinki process.

Along with many regional and other countries, Jordan believes that a neutral, low-key forum of this sort might be the best place to address contentious regional issues. A CSCME could provide a neutral forum in which to discuss common challenges, and a credible framework for collective action. It could be a focus for non-military solutions; for surely it is plain to all that military solutions are not solutions at all. The recognition of common goals and aspirations, the building of a structure of inter-connection and mutual aid; these are the only lasting

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'Sustainable regional footing vital for peace process'

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sunday met at Al Hashemiyeh Palace with a delegation representing the Middle East Committee of Socialist International.

In an address to the group, Prince Hassan reviewed developments in the region and the Middle East peace process as well as future challenges facing the region.

Prince Hassan also reviewed the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty which, he said, was a crowning achievement of a series of courageous steps that tackled border, water and security issues as well as other important dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as the status of Jerusalem and refugees which need more negotiations between the concerned parties.

Prince Hassan said Jordan was seeking to build a new world and to create better circumstances that will enable all parties involved to enjoy the fruits of peace.

Following are excerpts from the address:

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is truly a pleasure to host the Middle East Committee of the Socialist International here in Amman. We have always valued your interest in

and support for peace in the Middle East, and this will be ever more vital as we move from peace-making to peace-building. I hope you will not object if I say a few words on the subject of this particular transition.

1994 was a turning point in the history of the Middle East. Palestinian and Israeli negotiators progressed from a declaration of principles to the implementation of agreements. The PLO installed itself in Gaza and Jericho, and at last began to take charge of Palestinian affairs on Palestinian soil. Although implementation has had its share of difficulties, it is our hope that mutually acceptable solutions can be found, and that the spirit of accommodation will prevail. For our part, we are pledged to do our utmost to support peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

On the Jordanian-Israeli track, a series of bold moves culminated in the signing of a treaty of peace last October. In addition to formal agreements on borders, water and security, the treaty addressed significant issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict; it referred to the status of Jerusalem and refugees, although these are subject to further negotiations with other parties concerned. The treaty also laid out a number of joint commitments in areas like tour-

ism, development, energy, archaeology, and academia. The treaty signals a new determination to pool and distribute our resources in a partnership of equals. We seek to build a new world, to create new conditions, under which all our peoples will enjoy the fruits of peace.

The means to that end must surely be cooperation. One of the treaty's more forward-looking provisions is its commitment to the creation of a conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME). This entails the adoption of a regional forum, loosely based on the CSCE model that has developed in Europe from the Helsinki process.

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KING VISITS GHQ: His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal during a visit he paid to the Armed on Sunday holds talks with Chairman of the Forces General Headquarters (GHQ) (Armed Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Forces photo)

King: Jordan seeks more democracy, human rights

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said Saturday Jordan seeks more achievements on the path of democracy and human rights in the Kingdom.

"This is a small country where we have been through many experiences, mostly difficult and challenging. But we share with you our pride and what we have achieved so far in terms of political pluralism, democracy and respect for human rights," the King said in an address to parliamentarians of the follow-up committee of Arab-African dialogue who are on a current visit to the country.

"We haven't achieved everything ... but what we achieved is very short of what we hope we will achieve in the future," the King said.

The King stressed that peace is of paramount importance to Arab and African countries. He said peace that

will be achieved in a region free of nuclear and mass destruction weapons will enable countries in the region as well as African countries to divert their resources to developmental projects.

"Peace is so important to all of us ... to enable us to divert our resources and energies, to give future generations a chance that maybe many of us may not have had," he said. "A Middle Eastern and African area ... regions free from weapons of mass destruction, conventional and non-conventional is a very dear objective to all of us," the King said.

The King expressed hope that Arab and African parliamentarians will convey Jordan's message and its hope to work together for a better future.

"I believe we have a message. We have words that should be heard collectively through your efforts in the future," the King said.

Another seven killed in accident blamed on speeding

By Rana Hussein Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Seven people were killed and 22 were injured, five of them critically, on Sunday in the third worst road accident reported in the Kingdom this year.

The accident, like many others before it, was attributed to speeding and dangerous overtaking.

According to a police official, the accident occurred at about 1:30 p.m. near Muthalah Etn Khilch on the Zarqa-Jerash highway. It involved a private university bus that was carrying students from the Jerash Private University and a military vehicle.

A police official told the Jordan Times that the driver of the bus, Hamdan Kian, 45, tried to overtake a car on a two-lane road and met head on with an oncoming military truck.

The strong impact completely wrecked the bus and

killed both drivers. The military truck's driver was identified as Atef Mousa Mohammad Momani, 60.

The other five dead, all from the Jerash Private University, were identified as: Iskandar Salem George Habash, 19, Ahmad Munir Hassan Hamzeh, 19, Ra'ed Nawaf Halawi, 19, Majdi Abdul Ruhman Rimhi, 20 and Miketh Mohammad Abdul Aziz, 19.

An official at the Zarqa government hospital, where 22 casualties were admitted, told the Jordan Times that five victims were critical and were transferred to Al Bashir hospital in Amman. The other 10 survivors suffered from fractures and bruises and were listed in fair to good condition.

It was the third worst reported accident in the Kingdom this year. On Feb. 14 eight people were killed and more than 20 people were injured in an accident that

involved two public buses and a truck near Qatranah.

Also on Sunday, one woman was killed and 65 people were injured in a road collision on the Amman-Madaba-Arabi road, police said.

Police said that the cause of the accident, which involved two cars and a public bus, was still not determined. Overspeeding and wrongful overtaking were believed to be the main cause of the accident.

Police identified the deceased as Hamdan Sawadeh, 55.

All casualties were rushed to Al Nadim Hospital in Madaba and were listed in good to fair condition.

In many accidents, people have complained that mini bus drivers were the main cause of accidents because the drivers are paid commission on passengers and they rush to make more money on their routes.

Secret Israel-PLO deal reported on withdrawal

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have secretly agreed to a staged three-month withdrawal of Israeli troops from West Bank towns, an Arab-language daily reported Sunday.

That would amount to implementing the second stage of the 1993 Israel-PLO autonomy accord, which Israel has delayed since last summer citing security concerns.

Al Quds, the most widely read Palestinian daily, said Israel had agreed to pull out of West Bank cities one at a time, beginning in June with the town of Jenin. The report cited unnamed officials in the PLO-ruled Gaza Strip, which became autonomous along with the West Bank town of Jericho last May.

Israeli and Palestinian officials denied an agreement was reached, although both sides have already acknowledged the existence of behind-the-scenes talks.

Ahmad Quriea, the

Palestinian economics minister, said in a telephone interview that "there is no agreement yet" but said the issue would be discussed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat when they meet in three weeks.

"Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin will discuss in their next meeting the possibility of early redeployment in some parts of the West Bank before mid-June and the beginning of July," he said.

A foreign ministry official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said only that he was "unaware of any details such as a timetable."

Last week, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said there were secret talks over the past three weeks between Israelis and Palestinians expanding autonomy. But Mr. Peres said that a July 1 target date was set for reaching agreement — suggesting none had been reached yet.

Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath also revealed on Friday that behind-

the-scenes talks were being held in Sweden with the aim of "getting out of the crisis we were in."

Talks on a West Bank pull-out and general Palestinian elections have dragged on for months. A wave of attacks by Palestinian militants, that killed 56 Israelis since October, heightened Israeli fears that a West Bank pullout would endanger about 140,000 Israeli settlers living there.

Peace Watch, a non-governmental group that monitors Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, said that 123 Israelis were killed by Palestinians since the signing of the autonomy accord in September 18 months ago.

The number of Israeli victims for the previous 18 months was only 67, Peace Watch said, noting that the greatest increase of deaths was in Israel.

In Gaza City, Hamas leaders and scholars debated a local government bill with senior PLO officials Sunday

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Summit fails to answer funding questions

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — The United Nations' first-ever social summit wrapped up here Sunday having set the agenda for fighting world poverty but leaving unanswered how to fund this in an era of shrinking state aid budgets.

A total of 118 heads of state and government were among representatives of 184 nations in the largest gathering of world leaders in history. Among them were South African President Nelson Mandela, Chinese Premier Li Peng and among six vice-presidents, American Al Gore.

In a dramatic appearance Saturday, a frail-looking French President Francois Mitterrand, suffering from cancer and in the last weeks of his presidency, asked: "Is this summit a comedy before the world, or are we really determined to put social concerns on the level of the search for peace and economics?"

Mr. Mandela, who took the podium Sunday at Copenhagen's Bella Convention Centre to warm applause, said: "We in South Africa have learned through bitter experience that security for a few is in fact insecurity for all."

The list of speakers in the final weekend session in the U.N. Summit on Social Development was so long that speeches were expected to go to midnight Sunday.

But it was a foregone conclusion that the Copenhagen Declaration, a 23-page, 10-point list of commitments and 65-page action plan to fight poverty, unemployment and social injustices, thrashed out in five days of negotiating sessions that began on Monday, would be approved.

The document addresses specific issues, such as debt relief for African countries and honouring International Labour Organisation (ILO) rules on child and forced labour, but its significance, delegates said, was larger — putting social considerations on the world agenda in the same way the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro brought environmental concerns to the fore in 1992.

U.S. Vice President Gore took full advantage of this mood pledging Sunday the United States would continue to fight poverty at home and abroad and fulfill its responsibilities to Third World nations.

In a shift in the emphasis of development policy, he told a plenary session that the United States through the "New Partnerships Initiative" would channel 40 per cent of its aid to Third World nations through non-governmental agencies to strengthen small businesses and democracy at the local level. The figure is currently 32 per cent with the rest passing through large government programmes.

Echoing an impassioned speech which U.S. President Bill Clinton's wife Hillary gave here on Tuesday, Mr. Gore stressed the importance of relying on local bodies rather than heavy bureaucracies for action.

Some nations, however, were bitter about the summit, feeling it reinforced a Western power structure, embodied in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, that restricted rather than raised up developing nations.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Saturday: "We move from one major conference to another, pronouncing with lofty intention global action programmes, but we have never satisfactorily met"

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هذه ايامنا الاصل

Egyptian president hoping to find new partners in Tokyo

CAIRO (AFP) — President Hosni Mubarak begins a three-day visit to Japan on Monday hoping to strike up a new partnership between the two countries and boost economic ties.

A Foreign Ministry advisor, Nabil Fahmy, described the trip as a "stepping stone" towards better relations on a "partnership basis rather than a donor-recipient basis."

Cairo received \$99 million in Japanese aid grants and technical aid in 1993.

During his visit Mr. Mubarak, who will be accompanied by his wife Suzanne, will meet with political leaders as well as representatives from trade and industry.

The couple, who will stay at the Al-Salam Palace, will also meet Emperor Akihito. They will be special guests at a state dinner in the Imperial Palace on Tuesday followed Wednesday by a dinner hosted by Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama.

Officials from both countries agree that their economic relations have yet to realise their full potential.

On the agenda are aid projects to be funded by Japan, including a solid waste project in Alexandria and the construction of a bridge spanning the Suez Canal. Zoumou Takaka, head of the economic section at Japan's embassy, told AFP.

Egypt has "not yet seen as much Japanese investment as it could," Wahib Al Miniawy, head of the Japanese bureau in the

Ministry of International Cooperation, agreed.

Japanese private investment in Egypt remained unchanged from 1992 to 1993 at \$67 million, according to Japanese embassy figures.

Trade between the two countries rose 25 per cent to \$844.6 million in 1993. Japanese exports to Egypt were seven times the value of Egyptian exports to Japan.

On Saturday Industry Minister Ibrahim Fawzi announced that Egypt had won a contract to export \$1 million worth of trousers to Japan in the first deal of its kind.

"It is an important success for Egyptian industry on the Japanese market which only accepts high-quality products," he said.

A main obstacle to Japanese investment in Egypt has been a four-year block on Japanese low-interest aid loans to Egypt and investment insurance to Japanese firms in Egypt.

Mr. Miniawy said Japan may announce the resumption of insurance during Mr. Mubarak's visit.

Egypt is also bidding to attract more Japanese tourists considered to be the country's biggest spending visitors as it slowly rebuilds its holiday industry hit by three years of militant violence.

"Despite a 10-hour flight, the number of Japanese tourists rose from 45,767 in 1993 to 58,728 in 1994," an increase of 28 per cent, Fayza Hammam, an official at the

Egyptian Agency for Tourism Promotion, told AFP.

They seem undeterred by a campaign of violence launched in March 1992 to topple the secularist government in which 12 tourists have been killed so far.

The main outlawed armed group the Al Gamaa Islamiyah even warned tourists and foreigners to stay away.

But some 70,000 Japanese are expected to visit Egypt in 1995, the tourism advisor at the Egyptian embassy in Tokyo, Osama Nassar, has told the Egyptian press.

The increasing number of Japanese tourists has now placed the country second in the Far East market after China which sent 105,410 tourists in 1994, but ahead of Australia and India which had 25,756 and 16,164 tourists respectively.

And they have persuaded Egyptian tourism officials to launch a huge publicity campaign in South East Asia in a bid to attract even more visitors.

The Japanese "spend 15 times as much as the European tourists," said Mohammad Al Wahishi, the owner of a papyrus shop in Cairo.

"Many Egyptian guides have learned Japanese, especially after the drop-off in European tourists in the past years due to terrorist attacks," he added.

Ms. Hammam said extra staff had been taken on at the Egyptian tourism bureau in Tokyo "to step up the tourism campaign not only in Japan but in all South-East Asia and Australia."

Bombs found on Arafat route

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian police discovered two bombs along a road due to be taken by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat among seven devices discovered Sunday in Gaza.

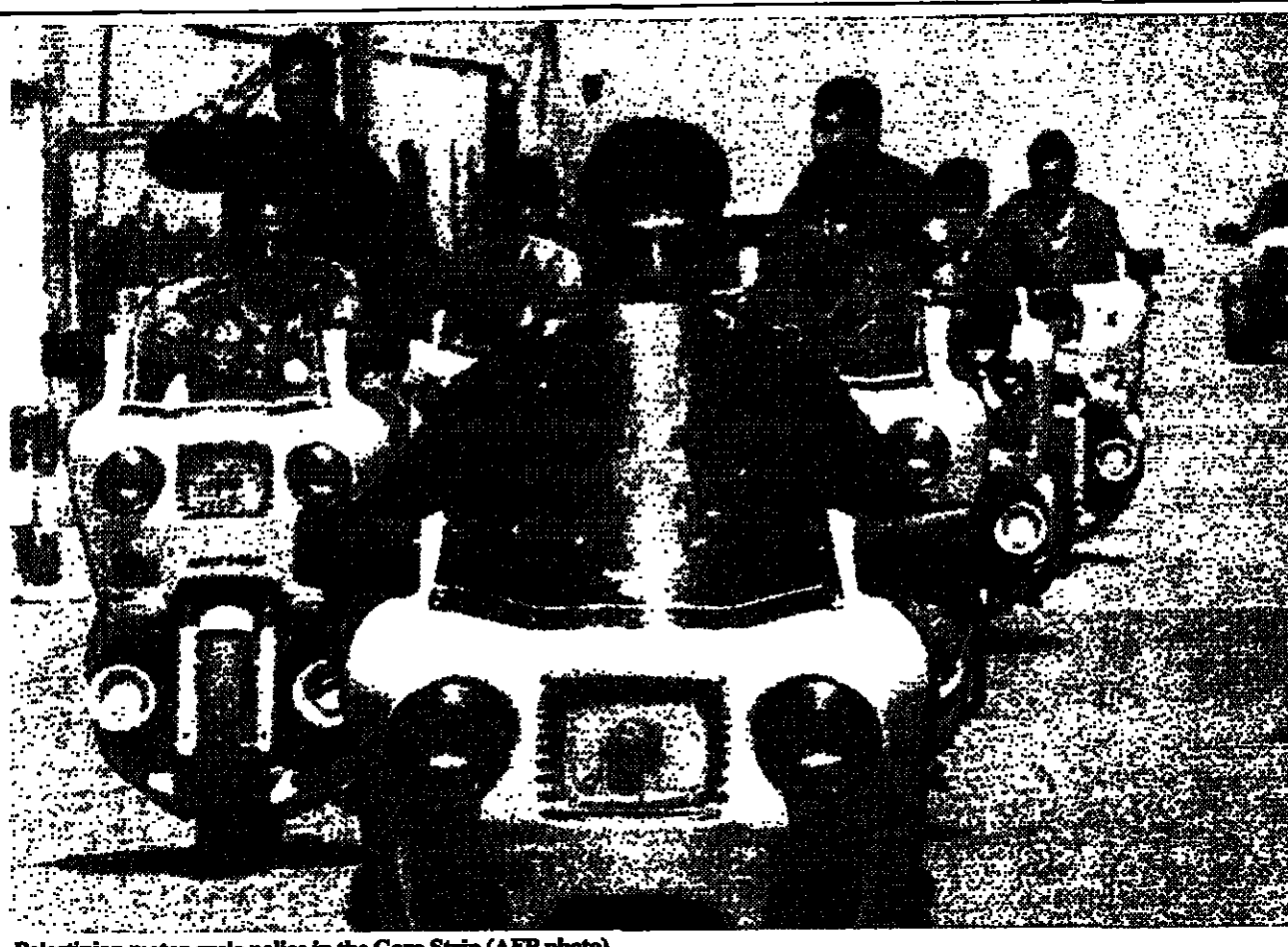
One of devices on Mr. Arafat's route — 40 kilos of explosives — left a crater 20 metres across when Israeli army experts blew it up in a controlled explosion, witness said.

The first four bombs were found along the border with Egypt, and the Israeli army blew them up, military officials said.

Another was planted at the settlement of Morag, and also destroyed.

Then Palestinians found two remote-controlled bombs on a highway near Kfar Darom settlement.

They alerted the Israeli army which sealed off the area, evacuating people living nearby and a secondary school.



Palestinian motor cycle police in the Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Huge prizes draw oil companies to Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — The oilmen are back in Baghdad. Executives from international oil firms have eagerly flocked to sanctions-hit Iraq to secure oil supplies for the next century from its huge and untapped fields.

Executives from big firms have visited the Iraqi capital since sanctions were imposed by the United Nations in 1990, blocking exports of about three million barrels per day (bpd).

But an international oil conference which has drawn 250 delegates from 29 countries and several leading Western oil firms was the first of its kind since the Gulf war, and underlined keen interest in Iraq's potential.

Faced with growing world demand over the next 15 years and falling output in existing fields, executives are already negotiating to develop massive Iraqi oil fields and renew term contracts for oil exports.

Iraqi Oil Minister Safa

Hadi Jawad split out the prize to delegates, saying Iraq had more than 30 fields open for development with a capacity of some 4.5 million bpd of oil.

These new fields alone are similar to the entire output of the Norwegian and British sectors of the North Sea and would match the capacity of neighbour Iran.

"As soon as the embargo is lifted we hope to be among the first possible partnerships in the development of (Iraq's) oil reserves," said Christophe de Margerie, executive vice president of French Total.

The United Nations will discuss lifting sanctions on Monday. The United States has been waging a diplomatic campaign to make sure they stay but industry executives are betting the sanctions cannot last in the long-term.

Total is at the leading edge of talks with the Iraqi government along with France's ELF Aquitaine and Italy's

AGIP on developing oil fields in south Iraq.

Mr. De Margerie told Reuters it was planning to invest "several billion dollars" to develop the "giant" Nahr Umar field once a contract is signed after the lifting of sanctions.

He said the deal would provide Total, which would take a majority holding in the project, with Iraqi crude supplies for more than 20 years. Total and the Iraqi Oil Ministry will not give details on the potential Nahr Umar agreement.

The weekly newsletter Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) estimates that the field has a capacity to produce 400,000 bpd.

Gaz de France is looking at the possibility of developing gas fields near Kirkuk, a northern city on the edge of Iraqi Kurdistan. Mr. Jawad said Iraq has gas reserves of 4.5 trillion cubic metres, which would make them some of the largest in the

world.

"Iraq has very large reserves of associated gas and free gas," Pierre Weulersse, Gaz de France vice-president, said.

ELF Aquitaine has been linked to the 600,000 bpd Majnoon field, which Mr. Jawad said held 38 billion barrel reserves.

Company officials from Russia, the Far East, Australia, Canada, South America and the Middle East were also in Baghdad this weekend.

For them, Iraq — which has the world's second largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia — could be a long-term source of competitively-priced crude to satisfy rising demand.

According to forecasts by AGIP, world oil demand is expected to reach 72 to 74 million bpd by the year 2000 and 84 to 91 million in 2010. Current oil demand is about 60 million bpd.

In the medium-term, non-

Middle East production is expected to peak between the years 2000 and 2010.

But further into the 21st century, experts say producers will return to the deserts of the Middle East, cradle of the modern oil industry, for huge and cheaply-produced oilfields.

"Future oil supplies from North America and Europe will decline, increasing the (role) of the Middle East," Mr. De Margerie told the conference.

In addition to having 112 billion barrels of proven reserves and 214 billion barrels of probable reserves, Iraq has one of the world's lowest cost of production.

Iraq's current production capacity is more than two million bpd but it is only producing between 600,000 bpd and 700,000 bpd because of a lack of export markets as a result of U.N. trade sanctions imposed after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Family members, relatives plan ICRC sit-in

4 Jordanian detainees in Kuwait said hospitalised

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — At least four Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait have been hospitalised after their health deteriorated as a result of a hunger-strike demanding their release, relatives said Sunday.

The four are among dozens of Jordanian detainees tried and convicted of "collaborating" with Iraq during the August 1990-February 1991 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The hunger-strike involves 20 of them, the relatives said.

At least six of them were sentenced to death but the sentences were later commuted to life term by the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

Family members and relatives said they planned to stage a sit-in at the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Monday to highlight their cause and demand for the immediate release of their loved ones.

According to the family members and relatives, the prisoners started the hunger-strike in mid-February with the hope that their case would be brought to the attention of Sheikh Jaber and they could be included in a general amnesty the emir usually issues to mark 'Eid Al Fitr.

"When the pardon did come, they found that their names were not on the list, and they pressed ahead with the hunger-strike," said the wife of one prisoner.

"One of our contacts in Kuwait who usually visits my

husband in prison informed me this week that four of the hunger-strikers had been hospitalised," the woman told the Jordan Times.

Relatives of two other prisoners, being held at the Doha central prison in Kuwait, confirmed the account. All of them spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals against the detainees.

Dozens of Jordanians are serving terms in Kuwaiti prisons after they were tried by martial law courts and later a state security court on charges of "collaboration." The main evidence of "collaboration" against them was that they worked for the Iraqi-run Al Nida newspaper.

Prior to the invasion, at least 20 of them were working for the official Kuwaiti News Agency or independent newspapers. The Iraqis ran the media in Kuwait following their invasion of Kuwait and the journalists were asked to report to the ministry of information.

"Most of them did not do any work at the ministry or at the Al Nida newspaper," said the brother of one prisoner. "The newspaper was printed in Baghdad and distributed in Kuwait."

However, "the courts were satisfied with whatever flimsy argument and 'evidence' the prosecution presented during the trial and found them guilty," said the brother.

No confirmation of the hunger-strike or the hospitalisation of four was available from the ICRC. As a policy, all Swiss humanitarian agency, which has visitation rights to prisoners in most countries, does not comment

on specifics lest such comments hinder their operations.

Several of the relatives said they receive letters — approved by the prison authorities who "screen" them — from the detainees through the ICRC. At least three of them said the last letters were received in mid-February, but none of them mentioned the hunger-strike.

A group representing the relatives appealed to visiting Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid late last month for intervention to secure the release of the prisoners.

In a letter presented to Dr. Abdul Meguid, they urged league efforts to "end the suffering" of the prisoners, who have been held "for more than four years in Kuwaiti jails, and put pressure on the Kuwaiti government to release them without delay."

Said the wife of one detainee: "The issue has not been given proper attention in the Arab League. The powers which have any influence in Kuwait are not interested in the case."

"No one has given any serious consideration to the fact that being present in a country under occupation does not necessarily mean collaboration and that those who remain behind may not have any choice but to obey the orders of the occupier."

"Consideration of such circumstances is part of all international laws, but no one is talking about them in the context of Kuwait," said the woman bitterly.

Chaos is enough to fear in Egypt

QENA (AP) — With the crack of a starter's pistol, 90 cyclists took off Saturday on a route winding past pharaonic ruins and the fertile farms of the Nile Valley — right through the heart of one of the roughest spots in Egypt's insurgency.

But fear of extremists was the least of the cyclists' worries. They had more to fear from rock keeping — or the lack of it.

Harried organisers of Egypt's 28th cycling tournament overlooked how to keep time at the finish line. The German athletes were so discouraged, they wanted to go home after Saturday's leg of the race, said manager Heinz-Peter Ruffin.

"We did not fear terrorism, but we came to fear the organisation. It's a catastrophe," he said as the cyclists gathered before the nearly 5,000-year-old columns of the Karnak Temple in the tourist town of Luxor.

It turns out the Egyptian Cycling Federation, which organised the 14-day race, said it could not afford to buy the camera that determines the exact time the cyclists cross the finish line.

The camera costs \$20,500, and the federation preferred to pay for hospitality, organisers said. As a result, the top three finishers were re-

corded. As for the rest, organisers could only promise to try to keep track.

No one, including the cyclists, was sure how the federation would determine the top 10.

Cyclists from 13 countries were taking part in the race, which began Thursday in the resort of Aswan. It will follow the Nile then the Red Sea before ending in the port of Alexandria.

In all the cyclists will bike 1,520 kilometres.

The race itself seemed a sideshow to a new government effort to prove southern Egypt is safe for tourists to again visit the spectacular pharaonic antiquities.

"We want to tell the world that in Egypt a small group of terrorist will not affect the 60 million people of a generous and hospitable nation," said Tareq Al Guindy, secretary-general of the cycling federation.

The race Saturday passed through Qena, a southern town in a region known for frequent battles between police and militants who want to turn Egypt into an Islamic state.

Last August, a 13-year-old Spanish boy was killed when militants fired on a tourist bus in a nearby village. Three years of strife have wrecked southern Egypt's once-

lucrative tourist trade.

Understandably, there was ample security along the race route.

Three pickup trucks, carrying police disguised in the gowns of Egyptian peasants, drove in and out of the procession of cyclists. A jeep with more policemen brought up the rear.

The six members of the Algerian team, whose country is wracked by a more violent Islamic rebellion, were not edgy about security but did not want to talk about it.

"We only fear God," said Oukil Ali, a cyclist from Algeria. "We are sportsmen who came to compete and that's it."

In the end, the route offered little more than a taste of Egyptian countryside.

Cyclists wearing fluorescent leotards and helmets first flashed through the streets of Luxor, then arrived at the wide Luxor-Qena road, flanked on both sides by wheat, sugar cane and tomato fields. Farmers, stooped in the fields, rose to attention as the colourful procession passed.

Little girls wearing head scarves waved and clapped. A cyclist whose chain came off was helped by two boys who rushed to his aid.

Witness says Geagea wanted rival killed

BEIRUT (R) — A man told a Beirut court on Saturday that Christian warlord Samir Geagea's militia offered him \$30,000 to kill Dr. Geagea's political rival Dany Chamoun.

Chamoun, son of late President Camille Chamoun, was gunned down with his family three months later and Mr. Geagea, the first of Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war militia chiefs to stand trial, has been charged with ordering the October 1990 killings.

Dr. Geagea faces a possible death sentence for the Chamoun assassinations and a February 1994 church bombing that killed 11 people, for which he is being tried separately.

Witness Yousef Ghalayini told Lebanon's highest court, the judicial council, that members of Dr. Geagea's Lebanese Forces (LF) militia asked him to kill Chamoun by planting a bomb at a shooting club he frequented to be set off by remote control.

Mr. Ghalayini told the court the LF promised him up to \$30,000 if the operation was successful but he instead informed army intelligence officers of the attempt on Chamoun's life.

"George Kharrat who belongs to the Lebanese Forces made me the offer of the assassination attempt when he noticed that I do not have a job," Mr. Ghalayini, 46, told the court.

He said Tony Obeid, chief of LF security, and other LF members "instructed me to stand at a distance of 300 metres and they gave me binoculars to monitor Dany so if he was not at the (designated) place I would not set off the bomb."

LF militia detained and tortured Mr. Ghalayini's wife for three months after they discovered he had betrayed them, he added.

Chamoun, who headed the rival National Liberal Party, his wife Ingrid, and two young sons were killed at their home by gunmen posing as Lebanese soldiers.

Former LF fighter Camille Karam, one of the accused, has told the court he was sent with a group of LF members dressed in army uniforms to carry out "a mission" the night Chamoun died.

Mr. Karam said he did not know what the mission was but he learned next day that members of the group killed the Chamouns.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Le Prince El La Sirene
17:30 Que Le Mielier Gagne
18:00 Marion N2
19:00 News In French
19:15 Carnet De Notes
19:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
20:30 South Beach
22:00 News In English
22:20 Scarlet and Black

PRAYER TIMES

04:29 Fajr
05:46 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:45 Asr
15:48 Maghreb
19:02 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Tel. 810740
St. George's Church, Tel. 7385
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 7440
St. Sofia Church Tel. 661757
St. Raphael Church Tel. 623666
St. Michael Church Tel. 623666
St. George Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 625252

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

Min./Max. temp. 5/16

Amman 13, Aqaba 23 Humidity

readings: Amman 48 per cent, Aqaba 46 per cent.

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 13, Aqaba 23 Humidity

readings: Amman 48 per cent, Aqaba 46 per cent.

Min./Max. temp. 5/16

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Amman 13

Princess Basma returns from social development summit

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Sunday returned home from Copenhagen after taking part in the U.N. Summit on Social Development which convened in the Danish capital.

In her capacity as a U.N. ambassador for human development affairs and representative of non-governmental organisations, Princess Basma delivered an address at the opening ceremony in which she called for reconsidering concepts on peace and social stability and

security to solve social, economic and environmental problems.

Princess Basma said there can be no social justice while poverty dominates the lives of millions of people.

She voiced hope that the summit would contribute to bringing changes needed for starting a new era which focuses on human values.

Princess Basma also participated in a meeting between ambassadors of the U.N. for human development and the non-

governmental organisations participating in the conference.

In an address at the meeting, Princess Basma urged Arab countries to prepare human development strategies and to make them part of their national development plans.

Princess Basma also met with U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali and presented him with the first copy of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) book on poverty.

Lawzi calls for unified stand between Arab, African countries

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Lawzi Sunday stressed the need for a unified stand between Arab and African countries to eliminate problems of poverty and unemployment.

Senator Lawzi was speaking to Arab and African parliamentarians who are on a current visit to the country.

He said it is of paramount importance to unify the stands of Arab and African countries and to enhance cooperation between them to achieve tangible develop-

ment in all fields.

"Individual states do not have influence on their own," Mr. Lawzi said.

"This era witnesses the emergence of giant and unified blocs which have a major influence on the international arena."

Mr. Lawzi cited one example where Arab and African countries were able to unify their stand and succeeded.

It was at the time of International Parliamentary Unions (IPU) election's where Arab and African countries voted for Fathi Sour, speak-

er of the Egyptian parliament, as president of the IPU.

Mustafa Ka, head of the Senegalese National Society, hailed the democratic march in the Kingdom and said that various African countries take Jordan as an example in their efforts to implement democracy.

Jordan will host the seventh meeting of the general assembly of the Arab-African parliamentary dialogue next year with the participation of 30 countries.

Industry ministry, German agency publish 1995 standards catalogue

AMMAN (J.T.) — An important tool for importers, exporters, traders, industrialists and all metrology standards, testing, quality (MSTQ)-related institutions, the "Jordanian Standards Catalogue 1995" has recently been issued for the first time since the establishment of the Jordanian Directorate of Standards and Metrology (JDS) in 1972.

The catalogue is intended for the use of those concerned with standards and/or their application in industry and trade or consumer protection, as well as for all personnel in the fields of MSTQ management.

In cooperation with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GIZ) MSTQ Project, the catalogue was prepared by the Jordanian Directorate of Standards and Metrology (JDS).

A directorate within the Ministry of Trade and Industry, JDS was established by virtue of the Standards and Metrology Law No. 24/1972. JDS concentrates on the preparation of standards, observation of standards implementation, the control of precious metals and the control of weights and measures (legal metrology).

Through its standards division, the JDS prepares Jordanian standards by forming specialised technical committees of representatives from the private and public

sectors along with scientific institutions. While the quality control division monitors the implementation of standards imposed on local and imported products, the precious metals division conducts the necessary tests to ensure that the Kingdom's and imported gold products conform with legal fineness.

In addition, the metrology division controls measuring instruments used in commercial transactions and confiscating those that do not conform. Among instruments controlled are, weights, balances and weighing bridges; stick metres and tape measures; fuel capacity measures; metres at gas stations and on gas tankers; and taxi metres.

Within the fields of standardisation, metrology, testing, quality, precious metals control and Arab and international cooperation, JDS undertakes the supervision of preparation, revision, and the amendment and replacement of Jordanian standards and monitors their implementation.

Under its metrology programme, JDS is responsible for the establishment and monitoring of the implementation of a national system for metrology.

It adopts all national physical standards that are necessary for the calibration of measuring instruments, as well as unifying and develop-

ing the means and methods of measurement and the calibration and adjustment of measuring instruments.

It is also within the authority of the JDS to accredit laboratories, grant certificates of conformity and quality marks and to conclude agreements with Arab and international organisations regarding mutual recognition of quality marks.

The control of precious metals allows the directorate to test and stamp those that attain the approved fineness.

In addition the JDS has the jurisdiction to cooperate with Arab, regional and international corporations in the field of standardisation and metrology and to represent Jordan at meetings and conferences held by the directorate.

The catalogue, which is available in Arabic and English, may be obtained from the Jordanian Institute for Standards and Metrology.

Apart from Jordanian standards, the JDS library contains a collection of Arab and international standards. JDS is a participating member in Standards of the Arab Organisation for Industrial Development and Mining (AIDMO) and a corresponding member in the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and Standards of the International Organisation for Legal Metrology (OIML).

Trade minister, investment officials brief visiting American Bar Association team

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abul Ragheb and other officials dealing with investments in Jordan on Sunday briefed a visiting delegation from the American Bar Association (ABA) on the investment climate in the Kingdom and the related laws, regulations and incentives.

During their briefings, the minister and officials of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) as well as representatives of the Amman Chamber of Commerce emphasised Jordan's commitment to liberalising its economy and enacting laws designed to improve the investment climate in the Kingdom through easing all regulations and extending facilities and incentives to businesses.

Emad Timawi, chairman of the delegation's programme

in the Middle East, said the visitors were impressed by the "lot of work" that has gone into transforming the Kingdom's economy in the last four or five years.

"The net message that they gave us was that there is a leadership in this country that is committed to economic liberalisation and there is a dedicated and qualified work-force in the country to implement the policy of liberalisation," Mr. Timawi, special counsel to the law firm Faegre and Benson in Minneapolis, Minnesota, told the Jordan Times.

The ABA delegation members, who represent a major segment of corporate America, would tell their principals and clients in the U.S. that "they should look seriously into the opportunities available in Jordan," said Mr. Timawi.

"The legal environment is suitable and the business risk

that they carry is reduced in this environment," he added. "We have to look at the final shape of the law, however." That was a reference to a draft law on investments that is now before Parliament.

In his briefing of the delegation, Mr. Abul Ragheb reaffirmed the government's commitment to giving the private sector the dominant role in economy and to providing infrastructure to businesses.

The minister outlined the highlights of the investment climate in Jordan and the incentives offered to foreign capital, and expressed confidence that the new draft law that expands the incentives that is before Parliament now would soon be enacted, Mr. Timawi said.

Among the officials briefing the delegation was also Ministry of Industry and Trade Under-Secretary Mohammad Smadi and the head of the Investment

Promotion Department of the ministry.

The Amman Chamber of Commerce received the delegation and outlined the business environment in the Kingdom. "We found people who told us they are here willing and ready to do business with the U.S.," said Mr. Timawi.

Mr. Timawi described the briefing at the AFM as excellent in that the delegation was given a clear picture of how the Jordanian stock market has grown since its inception in the late 70s and what developments have taken place in the market since then.

The lawyer quoted the AFM officials as saying that Jordan was slowly seeing the inflow of foreign capital to the stock market. "It is slow and minimal compared to the movement of international capital, but foreign capital is

coming to Jordan," he quoted the officials as saying.

The visit of the American Bar Association team is the first of its kind to Jordan after the Kingdom signed a peace treaty with Israel in October.

More than 30 trade delegations have visited Jordan since then, but none of them of lawyers who wield strong influence in advising clients in the legal aspects of investing in Jordan and the general business environment in the Kingdom.

The 18-member delegation, headed by Jay Volgeson, head of the ABA's section on international law and practice, arrived here Saturday.

Central Bank of Jordan officials and representatives of the Amman Chamber of Industry will meet the delegation on Tuesday.

The delegation will leave for Jericho on Wednesday.

15 political parties denounce U.S. stand on continuation of sanctions on Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — Fifteen Jordanian parties Sunday denounced the U.S. stand in opposition to the lifting of U.N. sanctions on Iraq since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait and described the position as immoral.

In a statement issued by the parties following a meeting of their leaders Sunday, the parties said the "unjust" siege continues for the fifth consecutive year thus depriving Iraq from exploiting its natural, industrial and agricultural resources and causing suffering and pain to its people.

The U.S., the statement continued, is leading a conspiracy whose aim is to starve and humiliate the Iraqi people in contravention of all

international norms, human rights principles and the U.N. Charter.

"The parties view this immoral American stand as really targeting the Arab and Islamic nations in their dearest spiritual values as well as their aspirations to build their development project and their right to progress and a dignified life," the statement said.

It said the U.S. continued to dominate the U.N. Security Council resolutions despite Iraq's adherence to and implementation of these resolutions and its recognition of the independence of Kuwait, and "despite an announcement by Rof Ekeus (top U.N. arms inspector in Baghdad), who led the in-

spection teams in Iraq, of the end of his mission, and despite recent statements by Russia, France and China stressing the need to lift the sanctions because there was no reason to continue the embargo."

It said that it was not strange that the U.S., which insists on the continuation of the sanctions on Iraq, is the same country which is supporting the "Zionist entity" with all financial, military and political capabilities and supporting the Israeli stand rejecting the signing of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) despite the fact that Israel possesses hundreds of nuclear war heads. The statement said, as the

U.S. is mobilising support for its stand and practising political blackmail, it is launching psychological warfare against the countries which intend to vote for lifting the sanctions.

The Jordanian political parties urged the U.N., the Security Council and the international community to lift the sanctions and to end the siege, describing it as unique in the history of mankind.

The parties also called on the Arab League and Arab and Islamic countries to work on lifting the sanctions, saying that it is not permissible to leave the people of Iraq, its children, women and elderly, die of hunger and be humiliated only to satisfy "American arrogance and to

serve Zionist goals and the whims of some Arab regimes."

The statement was signed by the Jordanian Arab Baath Socialist Party, the Arab Action Front Party, the Islamic Action Front, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Socialists Democratic Party, the Arab Baath Progressive Party, the Jordan Democratic People's Party, the Arab Popular Party, the Jordanian Arab Democratic Party, the Jordanian National Alliance Party, the Jordanian Democratic Party, the Jordanian Democratic Progressive Party, the Unionists Party, the Jordanian Democratic Progressive Party, Wa'd Party and the Constitutional Front Party.

Educationists agree on need for planning to achieve goals

AMMAN (Petra) — Despite the steady projects launched in the Arab World to eradicate illiteracy, Arab countries account for nine per cent of illiteracy in the world while they only represent five per cent of its population, educationists agree.

"The Arab World will not be able to confront all of these challenges unless a linkage is made between the countries' long-term plans and their educational policies," Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh said.

In an opening speech delivered at the regional meeting for educators in the Arab World, Mr. Rawabdeh said numerous challenges face the Arab World, particularly the

importance of modern technology and science, the information revolution, and the emergence of the "information highway."

Abdul Qader Al Atrash, director of the regional office of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) pointed to the several projects the organisation is launching in the Arab World over a six-year period.

The three-day meeting, with was attended by representatives of UNESCO offices in the Arab World and representatives of Arab ministries of education, will discuss the mechanism that should be used to implement the recommendations set by ministers of education.

CDD retrieves body of teenager from Yarmouk River

By Rana Hussein Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) rescue units in the Jordan Valley Saturday retrieved the body of a 14-year-old North Shuneh boy who had been reported missing for three weeks.

Anas Suleiman Mirie, from the Adassiah area, of the valley, left his home on Feb. 18, and did not return, the father of the victim told police.

On Saturday police received a call that a body was seen floating in the Yarmouk River.

The report said that Anas Mirie's decomposed body was identified by his father Suleiman. A police autopsy revealed that the cause of the death was drowning.

Also on Saturday, CDD frogmen retrieved the bodies of two people, both aged 19, from the Hidan area in Madaba.

One of the victims, Ibrahim Mohammad was reported to have been washing his hands and feet at a stream in preparation for prayers when he accidentally fell in the water. One of his friends, Mahmoud Sabar, jumped after him to save him, but both youths drowned, CDD reports said.

Search on for defrauder Meanwhile, Badia police

are searching for a woman in her mid-forties, who on Saturday defrauded another woman of JD25 and jewellery worth more than 1,200, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

The report said that the victim, identified only as A.S.K., told police that a woman claiming to be a fortune teller came to her house and offered to read coffee cups.

The victim said she was then asked to bring JD25, some jewellery and a new dress that had not yet been worn in order for the fortune teller to be able to read her fortune, said the report.

After the women finished reading the cup and left the house the victim discovered that her jewellery was missing.

A police official told the Jordan Times that the woman was still at large, but police have good description of her.

According to the official, this was one of many fraud cases to have been reported in the Kingdom in the past few months.

On Nov. 16, two women claiming that they were from Morocco were reported to have defrauded two Irbid women of \$33,500, JD70 and jewellery worth more than JD2,500.

Last year, fraud cases registered a 29.4 per cent increase over the previous

year. Police investigate death of farmer

Police Sunday in northern Jordan Valley were investigating the mysterious death of 35-year-old man, sources said.

Salim A.S.' body was found lying in on a ranch with a container of pesticides beside his body, the source said.

According to CDD officials, preliminary investigations indicated the man may have died from inhaling the poisonous pesticides. He added that the body was transferred to Al Bashir Hospital for an autopsy.

Also in the Jordan Valley Sunday, a 37-year-old man was listed in critical condition in South Shuneh Hospital after being shot in the chest, sources said.

According to the source, Mohammad M. was shot by a man who was not identified.

According to the source, the assailant was detained and police are investigating the incident.

In Irbid, CDD frogmen retrieved the body of a seven-year-old girl from a farm water reservoir in the Sulekhan area in Al Mashareh.

The child was identified by the CDD as Nariman Hussein M. No further details were available.

Some Jordanian activists continue to subscribe to conspiracy theories

By Sa'eda Kilani

Special to the Jordan Times AMMAN — Jordanians might be open to other cultures, but some still believe that the world is conspiring against them.

Some activists continue to think of foreigners as imperialists and tourists as Zionists; and anyone who works with a foreign agency or association is a spy or an agent. Those who do not agree dare not speak out.

At Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Saturday evening, four speakers from different ideological backgrounds discussed the role of foreign institutions in the Kingdom and their influence on Jordanian society.

But in the comparatively large audience of about 150 attendees no heated debate on the topic took place.

One speaker, Ya'coub Zayadin, secretary general of the Jordanian Communist Party, insisted that the foreign societies and institutions in Jordan and elsewhere in the Arab countries are imperialists who aim at exploiting Arab wealth and resources. He cited the U.S. embassy in Egypt which in the past was staffed with 1,030 employees and allocated \$45 million for research and study purposes.

"I am not an isolationist nor am I against the foreign culture," Dr. Zayadin said. "I am also the founder of Arab-Soviet friendship societies, but there is no comparison between these and the ones who have a huge

presence here."

Dr. Zayadin said people should be aware of the serious implications that "imperialist" societies and institutions might have on the Jordanian society.

"How can we trust these German institutions... when Hitlerism and two world wars emanated from that country," he asked. "I might not be scared of a Canadian society for example, but I am scared of these countries who have been imperialists for a long time... we should think thousands of times before dealing with them."

Abdullah Hammoudeh, a writer, researcher and member of the Anti-Zionism and Imperialism Society, also addressed the audience, saying that all foreign agencies, regardless of their mission, are dangerous.

"They appear to be humanitarian," Mr. Hammoudeh said. "But they all aim at enforcing normalisation and Zionism principles in our country."

Mr. Hammoudeh said he believed that poverty and unemployment in the Arab countries are a natural outcome of the West's foreign policies.

"These institutions which seem to defend human rights and democracy, defend repression in any country if it serves their country's interests," said Mr. Hammoudeh who last year wrote an article in the weekly magazine Al Ufuq, attacking German organisations operating in Jordan. These include

Kourad Adenauer Foundation, Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Participants at the two-hour meeting had mixed but limited reactions.

Some voiced their utmost dissatisfaction with foreign agencies, while others said the blame of the Arab's backwardness should be put on the Arab people themselves. "All foreigners here are spies," one participant said. "What have we benefitted from Westerners since the Ottoman days?"

Another speaker, Yasser Abu Hilaleh, the managing editor of the Islamist weekly Al Sabel, said he did not believe in the conspiracy theory nor did he agree with the description of foreign institutions in Amman as dangerous.

"Can we give up Reuters and CNN?" he asked.

Hani Hourani, director of Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Centre, strongly refuted all arguments in support of the conspiracy theory.

"How can we condemn these institutions and societies that we know we are in need of?" he said. "We are facing a new fundamentalist wave that combines traditional Marxists and nationalists who pass arbitrary judgements and put obstacles in front of modern thinkers."

"I don't say that all societies are honest and innocent," he added. "But we can't say that every tourist is a disguised Jew and every foreigner is a spy."

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Tawjihi students to sit for only one exam session

AMMAN (J.T.) — Tawjihi students will no longer sit for exams at the end of each scholastic semester. The Educational Council of the Ministry of Education issued a regulation this week stipulating that students should only pass one exam at the end of their final year of school. Students who passed the exam should take their certificate within a period of three years. If they do not complete the necessary procedures during this time, the results would be cancelled and the student has the right to sit for another exam at another time. The regulation will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for endorsement.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- ★ Film entitled "Que He Hecho Yo Para Merecer Esto" at Instituto Cervantes (The Spanish Cultural Centre) at 5:00 p.m.
- ★ Film entitled "Raphael: The Apprentice Years, the Prince of Painters, Legend Legacy" (Part I) with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis at Darat Al Fuman at 5:30 p.m.
- ★ Film entitled "Le Brasier" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of paintings by several artists entitled "Faces" at the Balqas Art Gallery, Fuhais.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Nazli Irtimcelik at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of art by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Hana Mahallah at Ab'ad Art Gallery.
- ★ Three exhibitions of plastic art by George Edilbi, Abdullah Kamaleh, and Mohammad Majall at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition by Syrian artist Marwan Qasab Bashi at Darat Al Fuman. Also showing a permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.
- ★ Exhibition of art by Consuelo Gonzalez at Instituto Cervantes (The Spanish Cultural Centre).
- ★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Centre.

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Indian premier faces crisis after poll defeat in key states

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's ruling Congress (I) Party suffered a second election disaster in three months Sunday, a fresh crisis for embattled Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

The Congress was heading for a drubbing in the western state of Gujarat and poised to lose control of neighbouring Maharashtra, India's most industrialised state, for the first time since independence in 1947, officials said.

The verdict, from staggered elections last month, sent shock waves through the 109-year-old party, and even an imminent victory in the eastern state of Orissa after five years in the opposition failed to bring cheer.

The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian People's Party) was heading towards a landslide win in Gujarat, sweeping 65 out of 99 declared seats and was leading in more than 50 of the state's 182 constituencies.

But the most stunning result came from Maharashtra,

India's financial hub where an alliance of the BJP and the Hindu militant Shiv Sena Party was poised to take power amid frenzied celebrations on the streets of the capital Bombay.

A despondent Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar, a veteran Congress leader who in 1991 tried to become the prime minister before giving way to Mr. Rao, virtually conceded defeat.

"The results are certainly not favourable to the Congress," Mr. Pawar told AFP at his near-deserted residence normally crowded with supporters. He said the alliance would edge past the Congress in the final tally.

"We have not done well, we have to admit that," said Mani Desai, chief of the Congress unit in the city of Bombay, where the BJP and Shiv Sena won almost all 34 seats on offer.

Maharashtra and Gujarat went to the polls last month, and elections were completed

in Orissa Thursday. They were among four states electing legislatures in February and March in elections considered crucial for Premier Rao.

Mr. Rao desperately needed to win to quash the remnants of a revolt which erupted in the party after he led to it a shocking rout in two key southern states in December.

Although Mr. Pawar said the results were not a vote against Mr. Rao or his free-market reforms, the BJP demanded a snap parliamentary election, saying the Congress had lost the moral right to govern India.

A Congress MP said the party would face fresh internal trouble.

"We are in for a crisis now," said the MP. "There is no way the PM can evade responsibility. It is clear he has failed."

Added Aslam Sher Khan, an aide to former party strongman Arjun Singh who revolted against Mr. Rao after the December rout: "We need a thorough introspection to know what has gone wrong."

Congress sources said Arjun Singh, who was sacked by Mr. Rao from the party last month, would step up his campaign against the premier.

"The Congress is on the verge of collapse," added BJP spokesman M. Venkiah Naidu. "Rao has failed not only as prime minister but even as party president."

"He will come under pressure to step down," he said. "Whether he succumbs to the pressure has to be seen."

There was no word from Mr. Rao, who returned late Saturday from Copenhagen.



Demonstrators carry a victim of poll violence in the eastern state of Bihar. At least six people were killed Saturday as violence rocked Bihar in the last provincial elections seen as a critical test for Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Scores of others were injured in street fights between rival political activists across Bihar, as early tremors from the staggered February-March polls in two other states showed Mr. Rao's Congress Party trailing (AFP photo)

120 killed in fiery collision in India

MADRAS, India (R) — At least 120 people were killed Sunday in a fiery collision involving a bus, a petrol tanker and a tractor-trailer carrying a wedding party in southern India, authorities said.

The accident occurred about 50 kilometres from Madras, capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu, on a highway heading to Bangalore, officials in Kanchipuram district where the accident took place told Reuters

by telephone. The collision occurred when the tractor-trailer, carrying a marriage party of between 60 and 70 people, tried to overtake the passenger bus, a district spokesman said.

Most of the victims were burnt alive in a fire that broke out after the crash, he said. "The passenger bus burst into flames and was charred beyond recognition," he said. The Press Trust of India

(PTI) said many of the victims were burnt alive inside the bus after the tanker exploded in flames. Only one passenger, who escaped out the rear door of the bus, managed to survive, the news agency said.

Last week, 17 people were killed and 15 seriously injured when a mini-truck loaded with sulphuric acid cans overturned on a highway north of the capital New Delhi, burning passengers who were riding on the cans.



A Malibu, California, resident tries to shore up the remaining foundation around his home. Large storms of the year, causing major flooding and mudslides (AFP photo)

New flooding is forecast for California

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — New flooding was forecast for central California Sunday as the state reeled from storms which have killed at least seven people, inundated several towns and driven thousands from their homes.

Another five people were reported missing after at least three cars plunged into raging flood waters, which swept away a bridge on a busy California freeway, officials said.

A series of powerful Pacific storms since Wednesday has created havoc throughout California, hitting many areas only just recovering from devastating floods in January.

The storms caused mudslides and flooded motorways in southern California, flooded hundreds of homes and businesses in several northern California communities and brought down

trees and power lines, leaving 50,000 people without power. Thirty-four of California's 58 counties declared local states of emergency due to the storms.

A spokesman for the California Office of Emergency Services said damage was "easily" in the millions of dollars, although the state had not yet estimated losses.

The cost of repairing or replacing washed-out bridges and damaged roads would be high, officials said.

January's storms caused at least \$1.3 billion of damage and led President Bill Clinton to declare much of the state a major disaster area.

Local authorities issued mandatory evacuation orders to residents of several areas adjoining the river.

As night fell Saturday, rescue workers halted their search for occupants of at least three vehicles swept away by flood waters after a rain-swollen creek ripped out a 100-ft (30-metre) bridge along Interstate Highway 5 Friday near Coalinga, 150 miles (240 kms) south of San Francisco.

Emergency crews found the body of one woman in a car, but were unable to recover it because the normally placid creek was flowing so fast, a California Highway Patrol spokeswoman said.

The search near Highway 5 — a busy North-South motorway — was due to resume at first light Sunday, she said.

Kazakhstan is in crisis after parliament dissolved

ALMA-ATA (R) — The former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan was plunged into political crisis when President Nursultan Nazarbayev bowed to a challenge from its Constitutional Court and dissolved parliament.

"Parliament is dissolved," Mr. Nazarbayev declared in a delayed reaction to a constitutional court ruling on March 6 that general elections in March 1994 were flawed.

He also told a hastily-called news conference Saturday night that he had accepted the government's resignation. But he reappointed top ministers, including Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegskidin, to a caretaker administration.

He gave Mr. Kazhegskidin and a handful of senior ministers a week to form a stop-gap government before fresh elections in two to three months' time. He also cancelled visits to Indonesia and Australia due to start on March 16, ITAR-TASS news agency said.

The 1994 elections, the first contested poll in the vast energy-rich state since it became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991, drew the fire of international observers at the time.

Mr. Nazarbayev, a former Communist Party boss, brushed aside their findings, which said they found cases of voting while election authorities had barred some potential candidates without giving a reason.

Despite the observers' misgivings, Western governments generally welcomed the election result because it ensured stability in Kazakhstan which, with its huge resources, has proved to be a magnet for Western investment.

But one candidate, Tatyana Kyvatovskaya, a well-known journalist who stood in an Alma-Ata constituency, brought a case to the Constitutional Court saying election authorities had violated the basic law.

The court found in favour of Ms. Kyvatovskaya's suit, deciding that the democratic principle of "one person one vote" had been broken and that election boundaries were wrongly drawn.

Mr. Nazarbayev vetoed its ruling. But the court voted 14 to 10 to overrule him and let him Saturday that its judgement meant it considered parliament to be illegal.

"The fact that parliament has received its final official confirmation," Mr. Nazarbayev told reporters. "I said he used his power to decree of appoint an interim government and would give his executive authority to form all legislation passed by the outgoing 177-seat parliament."

Earlier attended an agency session of parliament, which appealed to him to end the constitution to allow it to overturn the decision by the constitutional and suspend the court working.

Nazarbayev refused to amend and his on to dissolve parliament a difficult relationship with the legislature.

Ex-police officer killed during Bangladesh strike

DHAKA (R) — A retired police officer was killed by unidentified gunmen in the southern port of Chittagong as an opposition-led 48-hour strike gripped Bangladesh Sunday, police said.

Haroonur Rashid, 55, was shot outside his home in the city's Ambagan area, police said. They were unable to say if the shooting had any link to the strike.

"Many pro-strike activists carried guns and might have shot at Rashid willingly or unwillingly," one police officer told reporters. "Rashid angered terrorists, including those from political groups, by persistently opposing their unlawful acts," he said without giving details.

Like Chittagong, life in the capital Dhaka and other main cities was largely disrupted by the first day of the strike. Sunday is a work day in predominantly Muslim Bangladesh.

Witnesses said police chased bomb and stone-throwing demonstrators in the capital, beat activists in Chittagong and drove away strike enforcers in Rajshahi and Khulna.

The strike was aimed at forcing Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, now in Copenhagen attending the United Nations Social Development Summit, to leave office to allow early elections under the supervision of a neutral caretaker administration.

Similar strikes in the past have failed, but main opposition leader Sheikh Hasina said Saturday the latest stoppage would start an all-out effort to oust Mrs. Khaleda. "This time it's going to be

different," she told members of her Awami League. "She (Khaleda) is ruling by force, especially after opposition had quit parliament."

Mrs. Khaleda, elected in 1991, has consistently rejected the opposition's demands. Most opposition lawmakers resigned on Dec. 28 at the height of their anti-Khaleda drive.

Police said Sunday's strike, heralded by several bomb blasts in the capital at dawn, was mostly peaceful in the first hours. Witnesses said police appeared quite relaxed, reading newspaper or talking among themselves.

But tension mounted after hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets and exchanged bricks with security forces, witnesses said.

Police arrested several people while paramilitary troops guarded government buildings.

Authorities called in more than 3,000 extra police, backed by soldiers, to tighten security in the capital, police said.

Dhaka's streets were mostly without transport, except for a few bicycle-rickshaws plying roads usually reserved for cars. Strikers deflated the tyres of some rickshaws before being chased off by police. Train services were disrupted.

The strike halted activities in the ports of Chittagong and Mongla, local officials said. Other affected cities included Rajshahi, Rangpur and Dinajpur in the north and the northeastern tea-growing district of Sylhet.

The Dhaka Stock Exchange, the country's only bourse, was also shut for the strike.

Hanoi remembers battle that led to victory

HANOI (AP) — Vietnam began celebrating 20 years of unity with speeches and an elephant parade Friday at the provincial mountain town where the final chapter of the Vietnam War began.

Official newspapers told the story triumphantly and published grainy black-and-white photos of North Vietnamese soldiers carrying their red and gold flag onto the battlefield at the town, Buon Ma Thuot.

"Buon Ma Thuot's culture and economy had never been developed. People's lives were dark and miserable. Buon Ma Thuot was honored to be chosen by the (Communist) Party Central Committee to be the starting point of the entire campaign to liberate the South," the government-run Vietnam News Agency declared.

In fact, it wasn't quite that well planned. Before North Vietnamese soldiers captured the small town in South Vietnam's highlands, Hanoi was expecting the war to drag on into 1976.

But Buon Ma Thuot's fall on March 10, 1975, so shook the confidence of the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese government that it ordered its troops to abandon the rest of the highlands. As southern soldiers and civilians fled to the coast in a chaotic retreat, Hanoi realised victory was within its grasp.

It began a blitzkrieg southern drive, racing against the coming monsoon season. The drive ended 51 days later with the capture of Saigon on April 30 and the fall of the South's government.

Vietnamese veterans including Gen. Van Tien Dung, who led the attack on Buon Ma Thuot, gathered at the still-sleepy town this week to mark the victory.

Revelations in Aquino killing reopen old wounds

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — New revelations by one of those convicted in the murder of Corazon Aquino's husband have stirred controversy and reopened old wounds in the controversial case, even within the former president's own family.

The Aug. 21, 1983 murder of former Sen. Benigno Aquino unleashed a political storm which culminated two and one-half years later in the "people power" uprising that toppled strongman Ferdinand Marcos and installed Corazon Aquino as president.

In 1990, 16 soldiers were convicted of the murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. But the trial never established who masterminded the killing, although Mrs. Aquino and many other Filipinos remain convinced it was Mr. Marcos, who died in Hawaiian exile in 1989.

Throughout the years, the defendants have stuck to their story that Rolando Galman, a petty criminal who Marcos claimed was a Communist, slipped past security at Manila Airport and killed Sen. Aquino moments after he returned from exile in the United States.

The 1990 trial found that the soldier-guards killed both Sen. Aquino and Mr. Galman on the tarmac.

This week, however, one of the 16, former Sgt. Pablo Martinez, broke his silence and implicated three people, including retired Brig. Gen. Romeo Gatan, who were never charged.

Sgt. Martinez told the Philippine Daily Inquirer that a few days before the assassination, he was assigned by Brig. Gatan, an air force colonel and a businessman to guard Mr. Galman in a Manila Hotel.

On the day of the assassination, Sgt. Martinez said, he brought Mr. Galman to the tarmac at Brig. Gatan's instructions.

According to Sgt. Martinez, Brig. Gatan told him that Mr. Galman was to kill Sen. Aquino. If Mr. Galman lost his nerve, Brig. Gatan was to kill Mr. Galman and if Sen. Aquino also died in the gunfire, "it's not your fault."

Brig. Gatan has denied ever meeting either Mr. Galman or Sgt. Martinez.

Sgt. Martinez insisted that Mr. Galman shot Sen. Aquino and was then killed by the soldiers, just as the Marcos government had claimed. That finding was disputed by the 1990 trial court. It determined that

Sen. Aquino was shot by one of his military escorts standing above him on the airplane's staircase.

Nevertheless, Sgt. Martinez's account, if true, would support the theory of a conspiracy that went beyond those already named or convicted.

On Friday, the largest political coalition, Lakas-Laban, called for reopening the investigation "to end the lingering division among our people triggered by this dastardly act."

The coalition, which supports President Fidel Ramos, also urged the chairman of the opposition National Peoples Coalition, Eduardo Cojuangco, to reveal what he knows about the murder.

Ironically, Mr. Cojuangco, Mrs. Aquino's first cousin, was a close ally of Mr. Marcos and a friend of Brig. Gatan. On Thursday, Mrs. Aquino urged her cousin to tell what he knows "in the interest of justice."

Mr. Cojuangco, who ran unsuccessfully for president in 1992, has not responded to the latest calls but has denied knowledge of the killing in the past.

Bolshoi manager to punish protesting ballet dancers

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Bolshoi Theatre's general manager will punish ballet dancers who refused to perform in Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet in protest at the departure of their top choreographer, Russian television said. Vladimir Kokonin described the dancers' demonstration as "an unprecedented illegal action by a small group" and said all those responsible would be censured, the state television channel Ostankino said. On Friday the dancers said they were too "depressed and broken-hearted" to perform, following the resignation Thursday of the ballet's top choreographer and artistic director, Yuri Grigorovich.

The news agency ITAR-TASS said many of the dancers appeared on stage without make-up and in training costumes. They apologised profusely for ruining the audience's expectations, and appealed for understanding.

Grigorovich, 67, walked away from his job of more than 30 years in protest against staff changes decreed by President Boris Yeltsin, and said he had been forced to quit. Earlier, the Bolshoi's press service head, Alexander Kolesnikov, said Grigorovich had opposed "reforms" of the world-famous ballet company for months. The veteran choreographer was particularly upset by the government's appointment of Vladimir Vasilyev, a dancer with whom he had had a disagreement 20 years ago, as the company's new artistic director.

French police crack down on faith healers

NICE, France (R) — Police along the French Riviera said Saturday they had launched a crackdown on a ring of faith healers as a judge jailed two people, expelled two others and placed five under judicial control. Police sources said the nine were part of a quack network from the West African nation of Guinea operating in southern France. For large fees, the healers offered to cure ailments including sterility and impotence, resolve family problems, help pass school exams, or win the lottery. Acting on complaints from disgruntled customers, police searching the healers' residences uncovered evidence of tens of thousands of francs in payments for dubious services. In one case, they said, a 66-year-old paid 50,000 francs (\$10,000) to win the lottery while a retired police officer, 65, paid 25,000 francs (\$5,000) to ensure his son would find a wife.

India's 'bandit queen' allows screening of film

NEW DELHI (R) — India's "bandit queen" Phoolan Devi has agreed to allow the screening of a controversial film about her life after the producer agreed to trim some sex and rape scenes she had found objectionable. Producer Bobby Bedi said Mr. Devi withdrew a suit from the Delhi High Court blocking the screening following an out-of-court settlement Friday with Britain's Channel 4, which commissioned the movie. Ms. Devi was accused of leading a massacre of 22 high-caste Hindus in a northern Indian village in 1981 and surrendered to police in 1983. She denied the murder charges. The Supreme Court released Ms. Devi, accused of murders in 55 cases, after she spent a decade in remand, saying the years she spent inside were punishment enough. Bandit Queen, based on a biography by author Mala Sen, was made by director Shekhar Kapur and paid for by Channel 4. It won critical acclaim at the Cannes Festival last summer, and was nominated for an Oscar Award in the Best Foreign Language Film category. But it was dropped from the Hollywood competition after Ms. Devi raised objections. Kapur depicts Ms. Devi as a low-caste woman who rose up against members of high castes who exploited her. Ms. Devi recently formed an organisation to fight for the social and political rights of low castes. Bedi, who has the Indian rights to film, said Saturday that he agreed to trim a few frames from two rape scenes and a bedroom sex scene which embarrassed Ms. Devi. "We have come to a settlement," he told Reuters. "The total amount of film cut will not exceed one minute. They (cuts) will not have a major impact."

Balladur plummets in new poll

PARIS (AFP) — French Prime Minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur fell heavily in a new poll released Sunday that tested opinion on the candidates' ability to govern.

Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin and Mr. Balladur's conservative rival, Mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac, significantly improved their performance on a month ago, said the poll, by the CSA Institute, to be published Monday by the economic daily Tribune Desfosses.

Mr. Balladur came top in only three of the 17 problems tested in the poll while Mr. Jospin came top with seven and Mr. Chirac second with five. The mayor of Paris was cited 14 times among the best two candidates after being named only twice a month ago.

The prime minister was judged best-equipped to develop the French economy with 30 per cent, compared with 17 per cent for Chirac and 12 per cent for Mr. Jospin.

Mr. Balladur also came top for defending French interests in Europe and in foreign affairs, the poll said.

Mr. Jospin was deemed best-fitted to fight inequality, unemployment and defend the social security system while Mr. Chirac came top on such issues as security, immigration and the fight against corruption.

Another poll meanwhile confirmed Sunday Mr. Chirac's commanding lead over Mr. Balladur in voting intentions in the presidentials, due in April-May.

The IFOP Institute poll published in the Journal du Dimanche Sunday paper said Mr. Chirac would beat Mr. Balladur in the second round run-off of the election on May 7 by 64 per cent to 36 per cent, compared with 52-48 in the last poll published a week ago.

If Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin makes it to the second round instead of Mr. Balladur after the first round of voting for all candidates on April 23, then Mr. Chirac would win 59-41, as against 56-44 in the previous poll.

The poll showed however that voters were even more uncertain of whom they would choose. The 58 per cent who said they were sure of their choice was down five points on last week.

On Sunday, Mr. Balladur urged his supporters to fight to redress the situation and to ignore the "hazards" of the polls.

"We have six weeks to get the message over," the prime minister told 2,000 supporters of the centre-right Union for French Democracy (UDF).

Mr. Balladur, who was seen as a shoo-in when the campaign began, was overtaken by Mr. Chirac at the beginning of March, and all opinion polls have shown his support slipping steadily.

The prime minister has been hit hard by a combination of political scandals affecting ministers in his government, a reluctance to come clean on his income from a share deal, and a distinct lack of charisma.

Mr. Chirac won more support from former rivals Saturday when an influential centrist block backed his campaign for the French presidency.

Members of the Union for French Democracy (UDF) party led by former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing were the latest to jump on Mr. Chirac's bandwagon as his lead in the polls widened over Mr. Balladur and Mr. Jospin.

Balladur supporters reacted by lashing out at those whose allegiance appeared to shift with the political winds.

"I have no respect for those who rally, their hand on their heart... to whoever is leading in the polls," Education Minister Francois Bayrou said on France-3 television, attacking "the weather vane who turn toward Jacques Chirac."

Marie-Joséphine Balladur, the premier's wife, in her first newspaper interview, predicted her husband would turn things around in time for the April-May election.

"I find him more at peace than usual, more calm," she told Le Journal Du Dimanche. "It's his battle. He will pursue it and wants to win."

Campaigning on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, Mr. Jospin agreed the campaign was not yet over.

"What was not a sure thing for Mr. Balladur is also not a sure thing for Mr. Chirac," he told a campaign rally.



Hundreds of Shi'ite Muslim mourners carry coffins during the funeral ceremony of seven children who were killed in a bomb blast. Twelve people were killed and several others injured when a bomb exploded in front of a Shi'ite Muslim mosque in Karachi Friday (AFP photo)

13 killed in fresh Karachi violence; critics lash out at Ms. Bhutto

KARACHI, Pakistan (Agencies) — Nine political activists were shot dead in a hit-and-run attack, among 13 people killed Sunday in Karachi's latest violence. Also, critics lashed out at Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for failing to take strong action to halt the bloodshed.

In a related development, police arrested about 100 people Saturday night and Sunday in a roundup of suspects. But none has been charged in the recent terrorist attacks that have plagued the huge port city.

The latest mass killing occurred in western Karachi, where two rival factions of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), an opposition group, have waged repeated battles.

Gunmen with automatic weapons killed nine people when they fired on an office belonging to the MQM (Haqiqi) faction, according to police, who said the attackers probably came from the opposing MQM (Altaf) faction. Police in armoured cars were dispatched to the area to prevent further violence.

Police said they found four additional bodies in other violence scattered around Karachi.

Karachi has been the scene of almost daily violence for more than a year, and nearly 500 people have been killed in the past three months.

The violence attracted international attention this past week when two U.S. diplomatic personnel were fatally shot as they headed to work at the U.S. consulate.

The flag-draped coffins of the two victims, Jackie Van Landingham and Gary Duell, were flown out on U.S. Air Force plane Saturday evening. The flight was to arrive Sunday at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington. An FBI team is in Karachi to help search for the unidentified attackers.

However, police have not been able to stop the spiralling violence or track down the killers. There have been about a dozen terrorist attacks in Karachi so far this year, but none of the cases have been solved.

Several leading members of Ms. Bhutto's ruling Pakistan People's Party said privately that they were disappointed she had not taken stronger measures.

Shoib Bokhari, one of the top leaders of MQM (Altaf), said Friday that the blame for the violence should fall squarely on Ms. Bhutto's government.

"They are making fools of themselves," Mr. Bokhari said of the government. "They don't know who is doing the killing and they can't stop it."

The local government, instead of the king of forgetting his followers.

The rally was held in defiance of King Zwelithini, who claims only an "imbizo," the monarch's advisers claim the gathering was a deliberate attempt to dethrone King Zwelithini.

Mr. Buthelezi said, however, it was called to bind the six million Zulus living under tribal rule in KwaZulu-Natal province to a new "covenant" aimed at restoring the Zulu kingdom and creating a constitutional monarchy.

Under the covenant, King Zwelithini would become a constitutional monarch with no political power while the province would be empowered with sufficient autonomy to ensure Zulu self-determination.

Mr. Buthelezi, who is also home affairs minister in South Africa's government of

national unity, told the meeting central government attempts to interfere in the affairs of the Zulu nation had succeeded in isolating the king from his subjects.

The IFP leader has grown steadily apart from King Zwelithini, his nephew, since September.

The split began when King Zwelithini sacked Mr. Buthelezi as his traditional prime minister, saying he wanted to move away from party politics.

Mr. Buthelezi, however, claims that the monarch has moved into the camp of the IFP's arch-rivals, Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC), and is being manipulated by ANC-supporting Zulu chiefs.

On Sunday, he said Zulu chiefs were trying to pave the way to allow the king to return from "spiritual exile" to his people.

There were unconfirmed reports that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils, had agreed to political negotiations.

Earlier the rebels had insisted that political talks would start only after the immediate problems of residents in the northern Jaffna peninsula were resolved.

Talks between both sides on ending the government's economic embargo on the Tamil-held peninsula and on reconstruction and safe passage, which began after Mrs. Kumaratunga's People's Alliance won parliamentary

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Croatia allows U.N. troops to stay for now

Akashi's plane hit by gunfire while landing at Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (R) — A gunshot hit the jet carrying U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi as it landed at Sarajevo Airport Sunday, piercing the fuselage and narrowly missing a passenger's head, U.N. officials said.

A bullet hole was clearly visible on the right side of the plane's fuselage just behind the rear window. Now one was reported injured in the incident.

"This was an outrageous attack against the U.N. secretary general's special representative," said Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward, a U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo.

NATO warplanes thundered over the airport afterwards in a display of strength, firing chaff and flares to confuse any anti-aircraft missiles. U.N. sources who were present at the airport as Mr. Akashi landed said at least three shots were fired and seemed to have come from Bosnian Serb positions south and east of the runway.

The airport sites between Bosnian government and separatist Serb front lines.

The incident was the most serious attack on a senior U.N. official in nearly three years of conflict in Bosnia.

Reporters asked Mr. Akashi whether the country was sliding back towards war. "I would not use such a dramatic term but we are concerned about the degradation of the situation," he said.

"The purpose of my visit is to see if we can stem the tide of this degradation."

Bosnian government and Serb leaders signed a four-month truce and a related

freedom of movement agreement which expire on May 1. Increasingly serious violations of the accord prompted Mr. Akashi's visit.

A Red Cross plane was hit by a machinegun round Saturday at the airport, which then closed for the day.

Sniper fire has claimed a number of victims in Sarajevo over the past week, including two young girls who were killed on the Serb side of the line Saturday.

In retaliation, Bosnian Serbs closed key civilian supply routes in and out of the city, known locally as "blue routes" because they are patrolled by U.N. peacekeepers.

Serb harassment of U.N. resupply and humanitarian aid efforts in Bosnia has also increased dramatically in recent days.

Sporadic shelling of the Bosnian capital, beginning just after midnight Sunday, killed one person and wounded another. An explosion in central Sarajevo Sunday morning, shortly after Mr. Akashi arrived, killed one person and wounded a second, U.N. sources said.

Mr. Akashi had two days of talks scheduled with Bosnian government and Serb leaders.

"I think the (warring) parties have not excluded the military option," Mr. Akashi said.

"For that reason I think they are testing each other. But at this time it is urgent for them to recommit themselves again to the peace process and to greater cooperation with UNPROFOR (U.N. Protection Force) to

democratic situation is on May 8 and 9," Mr. Umanis added, speaking through an interpreter.

The three Baltic states were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 and deep suspicion and bitterness towards Russia still remain, three years after their independence.

Mr. Umanis said that any decision to accept the invitation to Moscow would have to be accompanied by measures to ease Baltic apprehensions, heightened of late by Russia's use of massive force against separatist rebels in its Chechnya region.

"We would have to explain to our people what guarantees we had that events of the last 50 years will not be repeated," Mr. Umanis said.

The DP called the police mobilisation "another act of violence committed by the government and the ruling party, leaving a stain on our nation's democratic political history."

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freedom of movement agreement which expire on May 1. Increasingly serious violations of the accord prompted Mr. Akashi's visit.

A bullet hole was clearly visible on the right side of the plane's fuselage just behind the rear window. Now one was reported injured in the incident.

"This was an outrageous attack against the U.N. secretary general's special representative," said Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward, a U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo.

NATO warplanes thundered over the airport afterwards in a display of strength, firing chaff and flares to confuse any anti-aircraft missiles. U.N. sources who were present at the airport as Mr. Akashi landed said at least three shots were fired and seemed to have come from Bosnian Serb positions south and east of the runway.

The airport sites between Bosnian government and separatist Serb front lines.

The incident was the most serious attack on a senior U.N. official in nearly three years of conflict in Bosnia.

Reporters asked Mr. Akashi whether the country was sliding back towards war. "I would not use such a dramatic term but we are concerned about the degradation of the situation," he said.

"The purpose of my visit is to see if we can stem the tide of this degradation."

Bosnian government and Serb leaders signed a four-month truce and a related

freedom of movement agreement which expire on May 1. Increasingly serious violations of the accord prompted Mr. Akashi's visit.

A Red Cross plane was hit by a machinegun round Saturday at the airport, which then closed for the day.

Sniper fire has claimed a number of victims in Sarajevo over the past week, including two young girls who were killed on the Serb side of the line Saturday.

In retaliation, Bosnian Serbs closed key civilian supply routes in and out of the city, known locally as "blue routes" because they are patrolled by U.N. peacekeepers.

Serb harassment of U.N. resupply and humanitarian aid efforts in Bosnia has also increased dramatically in recent days.

Sporadic shelling of the Bosnian capital, beginning just after midnight Sunday, killed one person and wounded another. An explosion in central Sarajevo Sunday morning, shortly after Mr. Akashi arrived, killed one person and wounded a second, U.N. sources said.

Mr. Akashi had two days of talks scheduled with Bosnian government and Serb leaders.

"I think the (warring) parties have not excluded the military option," Mr. Akashi said.

"For that reason I think they are testing each other. But at this time it is urgent for them to recommit themselves again to the peace process and to greater cooperation with UNPROFOR (U.N. Protection Force) to

democratic situation is on May 8 and 9," Mr. Umanis added, speaking through an interpreter.

The three Baltic states were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 and deep suspicion and bitterness towards Russia still remain, three years after their independence.

Mr. Umanis said that any decision to accept the invitation to Moscow would have to be accompanied by measures to ease Baltic apprehensions, heightened of late by Russia's use of massive force against separatist rebels in its Chechnya region.

"We would have to explain to our people what guarantees we had that events of the last 50 years will not be repeated," Mr. Umanis said.

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كندا من الأصل

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Education under scrutiny

THE MINISTRY of Education's recently-announced plans to convene a national conference on education in a few weeks' time, with the basic aim of charting new educational policies for the country, could not have come at a more appropriate time. If anything, holding such a conference is long overdue since Jordan is hard put to cope with the rapid changes in educational policies on a global scale and needs to get moving now. As Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh remarked yesterday the issue of education is both important and pressing. This means that there should be immediate and open discussion in order to prepare the groundwork for the proposed three-day meeting in Amman. Needless to say, educators and intellectuals should have the opportunity to organise their thoughts and make them known well in advance.

It is also a well-known fact that our school curricula and methods of education are archaic in comparison with the continually updated and improving educational standards in many other countries of the world. On top of the list of our priorities should be how to improve the quality of teachers and their methods of teaching. It is not going to be possible to do much in this regard very quickly since it will be a process that requires time, effort and investment. The same goes for reexamining our school books. Private schools in the country have been experimenting with the introduction of contemporary and creative textbooks, but not without facing hassle or objections from the bureaucracy in the ministry. Imposing one policy on all learning institutions, whether private or public, has effectively deprived the country of the opportunity to move ahead with solid educational plans. Furthermore, the Tawjihi exams are still the ultimate focus of all school students in spite of all the efforts to replace them with more useful and objective secondary educational tests. The negative features of the Tawjihi go beyond its arbitrariness and touches on the heart of the overall educational policy of the country. Maintaining the Tawjihi and imposing it on all schools across the board has, in our opinion, disrupted the orderly evolution of a truly modern educational system.

This is, in a nutshell, why we attach considerable importance to the upcoming conference which we view also as a venue to air out new ideas on how best to educate our children. And that is why we should contribute to its success since its impact will affect all of us in the future.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday said in its editorial that the current regional tour by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher comes at a time when there are intensified efforts to unify Arab stands in the face of clear Israeli intransigence and procrastination attempts in implementing international legitimacy resolutions, particularly at the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations. The newspaper said that the American move followed an announcement by the U.S. that it hopes that Saudi Arabia would contribute to pushing the Middle East peace process forward and a similar one by Israel. But to realise this hope, the U.S. has to take a clear stand on Israeli procrastination attempts, and the Israeli hope requires serious dealing with international legitimacy resolution and applying them, the paper added. It said if the Syrian position looks pessimistic even before the arrival of Mr. Christopher, this is because Syria's experience with the U.S.-supported Israeli stand calls for nothing else, especially with the approach of the Israeli and American elections, which will make peace a secondary issue for both sides. The paper concluded that the peace process is an integral part in which all the involved parties should carry their required role if they really want the process to continue and to bear fruits.

COLUMNIST in Al Dustour, Hamada Fara'neh, today commended a decision by Saudi Arabia to allow Jordanian and Palestinian workers to bring their families to territories. The writer said the Saudi decision was not taken in response to a human right and social need, also in response to a political thaw in relations between adn on one hand and Amman and Gaza on the other. said the 400,000 Jordanians and Palestinians working in di Arabia not only support their families, but they also stitute an important source of foreign currencies for the Jordanian and Palestinian market. Based on that, the Jordanian and Palestinian governments should rise up to level of responsibility in tackling problems and needs of people and provide them with government and ical support to help them while working in Saudi ia and other Arab Gulf countries as well as to assist ion makers in these countries in expanding reliance Jordanian and Palestinian workforce.

Human Rights File

By Waleed Sa'di

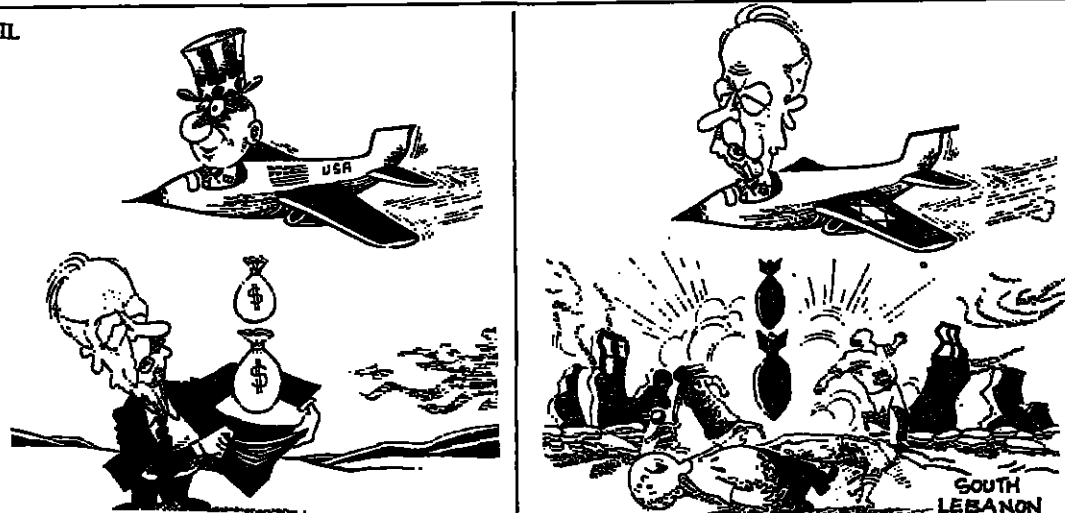
What is 'haram' for the poor is 'haram' for the rich

A VERY interesting debate broke out recently between Sheikh Said Al Hijawi, the mufti of the Kingdom, and the Mufti of Egypt Mohammad Tantawi over the issue of smoking and its acceptability by Islam. The controversy between the two sides was triggered by the fatwa of the Egyptian mufti, stipulating that while smoking for the poor is "haram," prohibited, smoking by the rich is "makrouh," undesirable. Mufti Tantawi based this religious edict on a saying in the Holy Koran which reads: "Eat and drink in moderation for God does not like people who spend lavishly." For Sheikh Tantawi, the rich can afford to spend their money on cigarettes but the poor cannot without jeopardising the socio-economic welfare of their respective families.

Mufti Hajjawi immediately took exception to his Egyptian counterpart's fatwa and rebutted the differential treatment to the rich that was suggested by Sheikh Tantawi. Sheikh Hijawi's construction of the Islamic view on the dangers of smoking took another root, which I found more convincing and profound. Islam, he pointed out, is based on the attainment of good things in life and the prevention of the bad. Accordingly, Sheikh Hijawi concluded that because smoking constitutes a health hazard, its rejection must be applied equally to all people whether rich or poor. One does not have to be a religious authority to agree with Sheikh Hijawi and reject out of

hand the interpretation of Sheikh Tantawi. The central issue here is whether smoking is detrimental to human life. This much has been substantiated by modern medicine to the satisfaction of all sides. Since this is the case, how can anybody condone smoking by the rich on the flimsy argument that the wealthy can afford to spend money on smoking and therefore there is no religious objection. God, Sheikh Hijawi said, condoned the good and forbade the bad. As smoking is bad to peoples' health, it falls under the criteria of things that are evil and must be foregone. I wonder if we are prepared to go as far as Sheikh Hijawi and make the sale, possession and use of cigarettes a "haram" that the government and the public should act in union to outlaw altogether. It so happens that there is a convergence of perspectives between modern science and Islam on this issue and one wonders when the Muslim Nation would take an affirmative action against smoking accordingly. It will be noticed that even the prohibition of smoking in public places in Jordan is neither enforced nor respected by the public. That shows the extent and depth of our adherence to Islam. Hopefully someone in Parliament could pick up this point so that the Ministry of Health would really do something effective against smoking. Likewise, it would be like a breath of fresh air if Friday's sermons would also take up this point with a view to extol the people to respect God's wishes on smoking.

M. KAHIL



EU looks southwards

By G.H. Jansen

IN RETROSPECT, the two-day seminar which was held in Nicosia last week produced some positive results.

The seminar, organised by the Lisbon-based North-South Centre of the Council of Europe as part of its trans-Mediterranean programme, gave indications that the Council of Europe has decided that it has to pay at least the same attention to its south, the Mediterranean area, as to the east, the former communist bloc. The change of focus started when the North-South Centre was established in 1990, "perhaps rather late," as the Spanish representative correctly said.

The focus was prompted by the fear that if Europe continued to overlook the Mediterranean area, that is the Muslim Arab countries along its southern shore, there could be a massive

influx of refugees into Europe.

But the new focus on the Middle East, however dubious its motivation, is a good thing, especially for Cyprus because the seminar decided that the North-South Centre needed better contacts with the area. That could not be provided through long-range connections with far-distant Lisbon. There are to be two liaison offices, one in Europe and one in the region. The choice was between Malta-Jericho and Cyprus-Tunis, and the latter countries were selected, though Cyprus, representing Europe, is just as far south as Tunis. Yet it would be no bad thing if Cyprus, because of its new representative role, were compelled, alongside Tunis, to think more of Europe's connection with the south.

Another new and very welcome factor emphasised during this seminar was the importance given to practi-

al demonstrations of Europe's interest in the south, that is to say new development projects. The Cyprus minister of foreign affairs, Alecos Michaelides, who chaired the seminar, referred in his closing statement to "practical projects," meaning such things as schools and clinics and technical cooperation, all of which would be most welcome, especially by the Palestinians and particularly in the Gaza Strip.

But the emphasis on practicality was somewhat devalued when he mentioned, among the practical projects, a proposal to bring a European-Mediterranean youth orchestra to Cyprus later this year.

This is just the sort of airy-fairy approach that has dogged the activities of the North-South Centre.

There was a further devaluation of the new European concern when the Israeli representative, Eli

Dayan, urged Europe to carry out its promises to help Gaza. This concern of his was sickening and hypocritical because what Mr. Dayan was in fact doing was asking Europe to make up for the 27 years of not-so-benign neglect of Gaza by the Israeli occupier.

And Mr. Dayan became positively sinister when he urged Europe to show interest in the forthcoming Palestinian elections in Gaza and the West Bank, by sending observers, he said. This was sinister because, on the previous day, Mr. Dayan claimed that the elections could be held this year even if the Israeli army did not withdraw from the population centres, as stipulated in the Oslo agreement. A European presence would thus legitimise the Israeli violation of the accord and it is to be hoped that Europe will not fall into this Israeli trap.

Will Rabin stand down in 1996?

By Haim Baram

turn to Mr. Peres.

MIDDLE EAST International (MEI) has learned from a source close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that he may not run for the premiership in 1996. During the last two months, Mr. Rabin has held a series of "soul-searching consultations" with his senior advisers. He is reported to be rather depressed, and a veteran official in his office told me that his general conduct reminds him of Menachem Begin just before his resignation.

But some of his political allies have different explanations for Mr. Rabin's doubts and misgivings about his future, and refuse to subscribe to this theory. "The reasons for Rabin's mood have nothing to do with his mental health," an aide told MEI on Feb. 26, "they are based on perfectly rational considerations. Mr. Rabin lost one general election to Likud in 1977, and he is very reluctant to go down in history as the man who lost power twice."

A defeat this time round will hurt Mr. Rabin's self-esteem even more, since the election to the position of prime minister will be direct and separate from the general elections to the Knesset for the first time. Most seasoned pollsters are convinced that Mr. Rabin will lose power to Benjamin Netanyahu even if another right-winger, Rafael Eytan of Tzomet, refuses to withdraw from the race.

An opinion poll on Feb. 7 showed Mr. Netanyahu would win 33 per cent, Mr. Rabin only 24 per cent. Ma'ariv's poll on Feb. 14 asked the usual sample of "Jewish adults" who they would vote for if elections for prime minister were held today: 33 per cent said Mr. Netanyahu, 20 per cent Mr. Rabin, 4 per cent Eytan, 4 per cent Ariel Sharon, 10 per cent Shimon Peres, 3 per cent Haim Ramon, 2 per cent Yossi Sarid, 1 per cent Dan Meridor. This poll gives 42 per cent of the vote to right-wing candidates, and only 35 per cent to the left of centre, perhaps not the worst result in recent weeks, but portentous enough for Mr. Rabin, considering the recent virtual collapse of the stock exchange and the deadlocked peace process.

By 1996 Mr. Rabin will be 75 years old, and his natural deputy, Shimon Peres, only one year younger. Mr. Rabin and his principal aide Shimon Sheves have reached the conclusion that, if Mr. Rabin's retirement is not planned carefully and well in advance, the panic-stricken Labour Party is likely to

Manoeuvring to keep Peres out

They are determined to avoid this option at all costs, hence the partial reshuffle of the cabinet on Feb. 20, pending a further shake-up in June. The minister of tourism, Uzi Baram, was appointed minister of interior, a position previously held by Mr. Rabin himself and sought after by Meretz, the junior coalition partner. Mr. Rabin gave the post to a member of his own party in order to be in a better position to give it to former Chief of Staff Ehud Barak, come the June reshuffle. Mr. Barak is entitled by law to take up a political appointment only in June 1995, after the obligatory "cooling-off period" from his military post. By June Mr. Sheves expects Mr. Rabin to have made up his mind and to act accordingly. MEI has learnt that if Mr. Barak succeeds Mr. Baram at the interior ministry, it will be interpreted as signalling Mr. Rabin's decision to contest the 1996 elections. Conversely, if Mr. Rabin finally decides to retire and to announce his decision after the June reshuffle, Mr. Barak will be made minister of defence, succeeding Mr. Rabin himself in this position.

This correspondent was also told on Feb. 26 that Mr. Barak himself is hesitating. He fears that it might be wrong to join Labour now and, according to the source, is perfectly capable of allying himself with his old friend Mr. Netanyahu, in return for the defence portfolio in the next Likud cabinet.

Mr. Rabin and Mr. Sheves are cultivating contacts with the maverick secretary-general of the Histadrut, Haim Ramon, as an alternative foil to Mr. Peres. If these contacts bear fruit, Mr. Ramon will rejoin Labour and the cabinet late in 1995.

Will Mr. Rabin be influenced by his thoughts of retirement in his dealing with the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular? His aides think that he will be less likely to be affected by short-term political considerations and the need to mollify public opinion, and therefore more flexible. Perhaps, but judgement on this must be reserved since Mr. Rabin's own convictions on the Palestinian issue and the Golan constitute an obstacle to peace in themselves, regardless of fickle public opinion.

Middle East International

Peace cannot be attained without ending refugee plight

By Pascal B. Karmy

THE UNITED Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has defined "refugees" for the purpose of its mandate as established by the U.N. General Assembly Resolution 302(V) of Dec. 8, 1949 as "all persons who had lived in Palestine for at least two years before Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, and who, as a result of it, lost both their homes and their means of earning a living." Article 11 of U.N. General Assembly 194(III) of Dec. 11, 1948 applies to the above-mentioned category of refugees. This article provides that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of, or damage to, property which under principles of international law, or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible." This resolution has been reaffirmed each year by the U.N. General Assembly to no avail. Israel's opposition to repatriation of the Palestine refugees has apparently not changed or diminished.

Under Paragraph 2 of Article V of the Oslo accord between Israel and the PLO, it is provided that

the question of refugees, among other matters, will be dealt with during the permanent status negotiations, which should commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period, between the government of Israel and the Palestinian people representatives. In effect the permanent status negotiations are expected to start not later than September 1996.

Let us, however, leave now the question of the refugees of 1948 for the time being and deal with the current and more urgent problem of the "displaced" Palestinians, those who had fled from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in consequence of the 1967 war or who were expelled from those territories by force or threats. This problem was discussed in Amman on March 8, by the four parties involved, namely Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian representatives.

The purpose of the meeting was, I presume, to enhance the right of the displaced Palestinians to repatriation and the drawing up of a schedule for their gradual return to Gaza Strip or the West Bank. But apparently the Israeli delegation would not concede anything and consequently the meeting did not achieve any concrete progress with the exception of the formation of committees.

What are the legal and

humanitarian grounds for the return of the 'displaced' Palestinians to their homes in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip? Paragraph 1 of the Security Council Resolution 237 of June 14, 1967 "calls upon the government of Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations have taken place and to facilitate the return of those inhabitants who have fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities."

Article XII of the Oslo accord provides inter alia, for: The constitution of a continuing committee that will decide by agreement on the modalities of admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, together with the necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern will be dealt with by this committee." Paragraph 3 of Annex 1 of the accord provides that: "The future status of displaced Palestinians who were registered on June 4, 1967 will not be prejudiced because they are unable to participate in the election process due to practical reasons."

Article 8 of the Jordan-Israel agreement provides, inter alia, that the parties will seek to resolve the human problems caused by the conflict in the Middle East in appropriate forums, in accordance with international law, including the fol-

lowing: "(a) in the case of displaced persons, in a quadripartite committee together with Egypt and the Palestinians."

It should be observed that all the above-mentioned agreements concluded with Israel leave much to be desired as far as the displaced persons are concerned, as neither of them explicitly provide for the right of return. All of them just refer the problem to committees for talks or debate and this gives Israel a golden opportunity to procrastinate or prevaricate so as to weaken the right of return by arrogating to itself the right to admit whom it wishes and to limit the numbers of those under to be repatriated.

As explained above, the distinction between a Palestinian 'refugee' of 1948 and a 'displaced' person of 1967 is quite clear. But there may arise cases where a Palestinian is at the same time a 'refugee' of 1948 and a 'displaced' person as a Palestinian might have left his home in 1948 in what is now called Israel and lived thereafter in the West Bank or in Gaza Strip and then left either of these two areas before or after 1967. The Arab position defines a displaced person as the one who had left the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a result of the 1967 war, including those persons who were then outside those areas but were not able or were not allowed by

Israel to return to them. The Arab parties estimate the number of those persons at about 800,000 (about 600,000 from the West Bank and about 200,000 from Gaza Strip) but Israel claims that the number is much less than that. It is relevant to mention here that under the pressure of world opinion and United Nations resolutions, Israel announced in July 1967 that it would allow the repatriation of displaced persons of the 1967 war but it imposed such conditions and time limits that only 14,000 of the displaced persons were permitted to return while at the same time it expelled some 17,000 out of the West Bank alone.

Israel argues the right of return does not apply to displaced persons' descendants or persons who happened to be outside the occupied territories at the outbreak of 1967 hostilities. Israel's arguments do not withstand the test of scrutiny as they do not conform with logic or justice, nor are they consistent with the common sense interpretation of Article 1 of the above-quoted Security Council Resolution 237. In June 1967, the Security Council members were primarily concerned with the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations were taking place and had therefore to deal urgently with the problem of the inhabitants who fled

the areas on account of the hostilities Security Council members did not exclude, nor was there any intention on their part to exclude, those inhabitants of the West Bank to the Gaza Strip who were at that time outside those territories. Furthermore, Article 13 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 clearly stipulates that: "Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own and the right to return to it."

In conclusion, Israel cannot deny the right to any Palestinian and his family or his descendants to return to the West Bank or Gaza Strip, whether the head of the family had left those territories before or after 1967. After all, those areas are occupied territories from which Israel is bound to withdraw under international law and U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 and the Oslo accord. Therefore, any displaced person as defined above should be permitted to return and live at peace with the neighbours. Lastly, does not the government of Israel admit to Israel any Jew who comes from the farthest corner of Earth and automatically grant him citizenship under the Law of Return. For much stronger reasons and grounds, Palestinians and their descendants have the inherent right to return to their ancestral land in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

كلمة من القدس

Christopher sees chance of Israel-Syria breakthrough

DAMASCUS (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Sunday spoke of new hope for a breakthrough on the stalled Israeli-Syrian track of the peace process ahead of talks here with President Hafez Al Assad.

"I feel we have a new opportunity on that track," Mr. Christopher told reporters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, before heading here for talks Monday with the Syrian leader. He was due to arrive late Sunday.

Meanwhile, Syria indicated it was in no mood to make territorial concessions to break the deadlock in talks with Israel, which have remained suspended since February 1994.

"Ignoring the core of the problem will only lead to further conflicts and bloody violence in the region and peace will never be established so long as Israel continues to occupy Arab land," said the Syria Times.

The government newspaper Tishrin stressed "Syria cannot exchange peace for Israeli promises."

"Experience has shown us that Israel does not respect its promises and that its territorial ambitions have blinded its leaders," it added.

The Israeli-Syrian talks are deadlocked over the scope

and timing of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has refused a "total withdrawal from the Golan, offering instead a small-scale troop pullout from the strategic plateau over a period of 30-36 months to test Syria's desire for peace. Syria swiftly turned it down.

Mr. Christopher failed seven times last year to break the deadlock. The talks in Damascus will be his first with Syrian leaders this year.

He said Sunday that recent statements by Mr. Rabin were "an indication that he (Rabin) felt that it was feasible for him to move ahead on that track."

Speaking after talks with Mr. Christopher Thursday, Mr. Rabin said he was ready to resume contacts with Syria quickly.

The Syrian and Israeli army chiefs-of-staff met in Washington on Dec. 22.

U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross held talks with Israeli chief-of-staff Amnon Shahak Saturday on the security guarantees demanded by Israel ahead of a withdrawal from the Golan.

The Israeli newspaper Maariv reported that Mr. Rabin had given a message to Mr. Christopher for the Sy-

rians. The message was, "the Israeli government can overcome the differences with Syria, that it has the political strength to make a peace accord and to win a referendum on the issue."

Mr. Rabin has promised a referendum if Israel returns a substantial area of the Golan.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told Sunday's Haaretz newspaper: "There are still 20 months before general elections."

"Time is short and the danger of missing the opportunity calls for redoubled effort. We have 20 months to do it."

Mr. Christopher began a week-long tour of the Middle East Wednesday, prompted by a sense that "it was time for Israel to move further on the Palestinian, Jordanian and Syrian tracks," a U.S. official said.

Mr. Christopher said the tour was "timely and appropriate."

In Jeddah he also called on Arab states to lift their economic boycott of Israel.

"The boycott must come to an end now," he said, while praising the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for pledging last September to lift the indirect embargo which hits companies trading with Israel.

Qatari, Omani ministers absent from Christopher talks on Iraq

JEDDAH (Agencies) — Gulf foreign ministers Sunday backed American efforts to keep U.N. sanctions on Iraq.

A joint statement issued after a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher urged the U.N. Security Council "to resist any amendments to the sanctions regime until Iraq fully complies with all its obligations."

Most members of the six-state Gulf Cooperation Council, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait who feel most threatened by Iraq, agree with Washington that the oil and trade embargo must remain until Baghdad complies fully with all U.N. conditions imposed after the 1991 Gulf war.

The two states' share of the world oil market could shrink considerably if Iraqi petroleum starts flowing again. But in a deepening rift, Oman and Qatar did not send foreign ministers to the meeting.

They sent ambassadors instead in a clear message of protest to the U.S. secretary after hosting Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf last week. The two states support Baghdad's assertion that it has complied with the necessary conditions for a lifting of sanctions, including dismantling its weapons of mass destruction and recognising Kuwait's sovereignty.

The U.N. Security Council

is to meet Monday to hold its two-monthly review of the sanctions against Iraq, though diplomats say there is unlikely to be any change.

Mr. Christopher told a news conference after the talks: "We don't believe that Iraq is even close to complying. Iraq's record of compliance is genuinely a travesty."

His talks here also focused on the Arab economic boycott (against Israel) must come to an end now," Mr. Christopher said, while praising the GCC for pledging to lift last September the indirect embargo which hit companies trading with Israel.

Gulf states explained they had now put in place most legal and administrative measures to end the indirect boycott, a U.S. official said.

Sunday's joint statement referred in particular to the U.N. demand that Iraq release all prisoners of war. The statement said Iraq remain in Iraq or unaccounted for. Iraq has claimed it has no more prisoners.

The statement urged Iraq to accept a one-time sale of \$1.6 billion worth of oil to finance humanitarian purchases and costs of U.N. operations in the country.

Turning to Iran, the statement stressed a mutual commitment to security in the Gulf "including freedom of navigation in its international

maritime channels."

Washington recently voiced concern about Iran's reported deployment of anti-aircraft missiles to the Strait of Hormuz, where Tehran is locked in a dispute with the United Arab Emirates over three strategic islands.

Mr. Christopher arrived in Jeddah earlier Sunday from Israel on his latest Middle East peace shuttle.

He met at the conference table, on Thursday, with John Paul II to Sultan Qaboos of Oman, the official agency ONA said. The papal envoy, Jean-Louis Taurin, passed on the message through Oman's Deputy Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sayyid Ben Fahd Ben Mahmoud Al Said with whom he discussed "the need to coordinate efforts in the service of world peace," the agency said. Before arriving in Muscat, Mr. Taurin visited Abu Dhabi, where he gave a similar message to United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, officials said. His Gulf tour comes as the Pope prepares to meet soon with Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. During their last meeting on June 28 Mr. Aziz called for Vatican intervention to help secure an easing of United Nations sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. The Pope has called several times for dialogue in order to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people under the oil and trade embargo.

However, the two have pledged not to violate the sanctions, which come up for their bimonthly review by the U.N. Security Council Monday.

Oman, a temporary member of the Security Council, has also said it will not support Russia and France if they press for ending the embargo.

Mr. Christopher was scheduled to meet King Fahd later Sunday before leaving for Damascus to meet Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Monday.

Secret Israel-PLO withdrawal deal reported

(Continued from page 1)

in the first such move in the absence of a Palestinian legislative council.

The Palestinian Authority has "decided to go to the people to solicit their feedback," an official statement on the workshop said.

Israel and the PLO resume Tuesday in Cairo negotiations on elections to a Palestinian autonomy council and the extent of its legislative powers.

The two sides have agreed to a July 1 deadline to try to conclude an agreement for Israeli army redeployment and elections.

Palestinians say they will need two months to prepare for the vote, but international experts cooperating with the PLO say four months is a more realistic time-frame.

The debate's conclusions will be considered in drawing a final law on local government which will be ratified by Mr. Arafat, said Hussein Al Aaraj, deputy minister of local government in the authority.

Similar to current legislation on housing, the local government law will remain effective until parliament is elected, and will then be put to it for approval.

At the workshop, held in Gaza City's Shawa Cultural Centre, Mahmoud Al Zahhar, leader of Hamas, objected to the draft's appointment rather than election of

municipal leaders.

He also criticised the proposed "security" functions for town halls. "It will mean future tyranny by a corrupt mayor or governor," he said.

"Are we talking about a security apparatus or a local government system," he questioned.

Hamas, opposed to the autonomy agreement with Israel, has said it would not run in elections to a parliament, but would join local government elections.

Sunday's workshop was organised by the ministry of local government, headed by Saeb Erakat.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres who met Thursday set a July

target date for an end to negotiations on the second stage of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank, which involves self-rule elections and an Israeli army redeployment outside Palestinian towns.

Mr. Peres also announced confidence building measures, such as increasing permits for Palestinian workers in Israel. The Jewish state sealed off the Palestinian territories on Jan. 22 following a suicide bombing which killed 21 Israelis.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said earlier he hoped the Arafat-Peres talks "reached an agreement on concrete issues and were not just hot air, without any foundation, which will not achieve any progress."

Newspaper move not enough

(Continued from page 12)

nothing, but demand a lot from us," he complained, noting that the Kingdom was perhaps the only country which levies customs duties on newspaper.

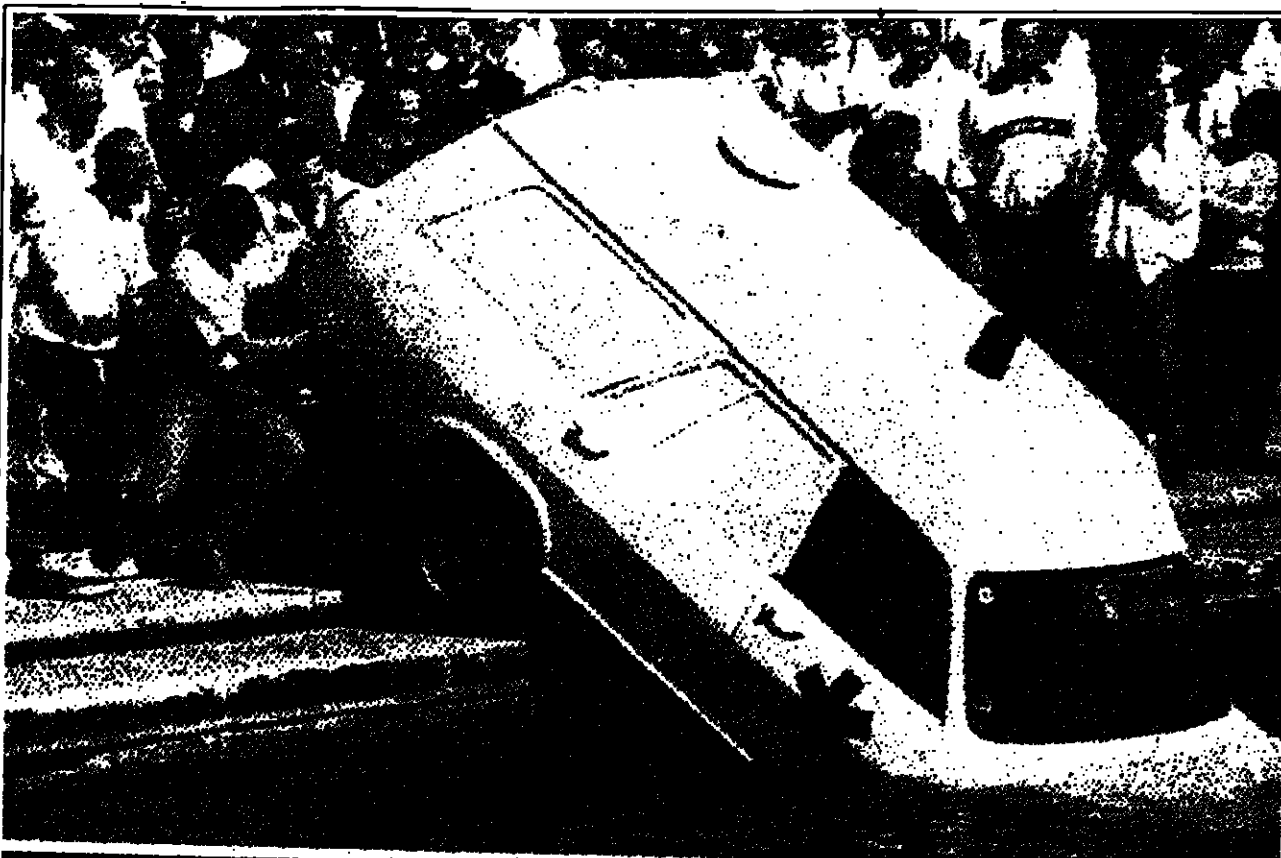
The government introduced customs duties on newspaper last year after the newspaper establishments reported high profits in previous years. But, the publishers now point out, those profits were made when newspaper used to cost 30 per cent of what it costs today.

Mr. Abu Libdeh estimated that the publishing com-

panies suffer a loss of about 30 to 40 fils on each sold copy of daily newspaper since the actual production cost is more than the 150 fils price. The shortfall is made up by advertising revenues.

Seif Al Sharif, director-general of the Jordan Press and Publication Company, which publishes Al Dustour, issued a similar call for a total exemption from all customs duties and related charges for newspaper last week.

Al Ra'i imports 7,000 tonnes of newspaper every year while Al Dustour's imports are estimated at between 5,000 and 6,000 tonnes and Al Aswaq's at 2,500 tonnes.



PROTEST THE FRENCH WAY: Ambulance drivers push one of their vehicles into Marseilles old port harbour on Sunday to protest a new hospital regulation which would

lighten their workload by transferring to private taxis the transportation of certain patients (AFP photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel returns lost water-ski to King

EILAT (AFP) — Israel has handed back to King Hussein a water-ski he lost 15 years ago in the Red Sea when the two neighbours were technically still at war, a newspaper reported Sunday. The ski, bearing the King's crest of arms, washed up in 1980 on the shores of Eilat, adjacent to Aqaba. It was kept as a souvenir in the local water sports club. Following the signing of a peace treaty last October 26, club chairman Ami Maor decided to give it back. He handed it to the head of the Royal Jordanian Water Sports Federation, Simon Khoury, who attended a wind-surfing competition in Eilat last week, the Maariv newspaper said.

3 Arab countries at Israel book fair

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Egypt, Jordan and Morocco were Sunday to attend an Israeli book fair for the first time, the organisers said. Publishers from the three countries, including Dar El Hada of Egypt and Editions Edif of Morocco, will be represented at the event to be opened in the evening by President Ezer Weizman. "I warmly welcome the participation of our Arab neighbours as it constitutes an important step toward developing a deeper understanding among our peoples," said the fair's managing director, Zev Birger.

Papal envoy tours Gulf states

touring the Gulf, on Saturday gave a message from Pope John Paul II to Sultan Qaboos of Oman, the official agency ONA said. The papal envoy, Jean-Louis Taurin, passed on the message through Oman's Deputy Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sayyid Ben Fahd Ben Mahmoud Al Said with whom he discussed "the need to coordinate efforts in the service of world peace," the agency said. Before arriving in Muscat, Mr. Taurin visited Abu Dhabi, where he gave a similar message to United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, officials said. His Gulf tour comes as the Pope prepares to meet soon with Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. During their last meeting on June 28 Mr. Aziz called for Vatican intervention to help secure an easing of United Nations sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. The Pope has called several times for dialogue in order to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people under the oil and trade embargo.

Iran to install two oil rigs in Caspian

NICOSIA (R) — Iran will install two oil rigs in the Caspian Sea during the next Iranian year starting on March 21 and might set up a refinery in a Caspian coast province, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported. It quoted Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh as saying on Saturday that one of the rigs was under construction and the other would be rented for exploration in the Caspian sea. He gave no details about the size of the rigs or say whether they would be used in any of the three oilfields in Azerbaijan's sector of the Caspian to be developed by an international consortium including Iran. "If appropriate conditions are provided, a refinery will be established in the northern province of Mazandaran," the minister said. Iran's eighth oil refinery, now under construction at the southern port of Bandar Abbas, is due to be completed in about two years.

Egypt to set up anti-pollution police

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is to set up a police squad to crack down on the growing problem of pollution, Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfi said Sunday. Egypt is also preparing new legislation to fight polluters, he told the Middle East Times in an interview. "There is nothing currently in the law to punish people. It is not really considered a crime," he said. The only existing laws were those against fishing and hunting, he added. "We are setting up a new police department towards this end," Mr. Alfi said. Egypt is to present a working paper on environmental crime to a U.N. crime conference in Cairo from April 27 to May 10.

Police smash antiques smuggling ring

LONDON (AFP) — British, Chinese and Egyptian police have cracked a multi-million-dollar smuggling ring in which priceless antiques came into England disguised as tourist trinkets, according to a newspaper report Sunday. A police officer was among six suspects arrested in Britain in one of the biggest operations ever mounted by Scotland Yard's arts and antiquities squad, the Sunday Telegraph said. Egyptian police arrested 24 suspects in Egypt, the report said. Detective Chief Inspector Charles Hill, who headed "Operation Bulrush," said his team uncovered thousands of Chinese and Egyptian artefacts in southwestern England, many of them thousands of years old and some valued individually at more than \$1 million (\$1.6 million). The total value of the haul was "incalculable," he said.

Khomeini's son admitted to hospital

TEHRAN (R) — Ahmad Khomeini, the son of Iran's late leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was admitted to hospital on Sunday because of heart and respiratory problems, Tehran Radio said. "Ahmad Khomeini was hospitalised this morning due to cardio-respiratory ailment," the radio said. Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei visited Mr. Khomeini, a 48-year-old cleric, at Baqiat Allah hospital in Tehran. Mr. Khomeini's office asked the Iranian people to pray for his health.

Kurds claim 90 Iraqi troops killed

NICOSIA (AP) — A Kurdish rebel group claims its guerrillas have killed nearly 100 Iraqi troops in attacks on military positions in northern Iraq.

The official Islamic Republic News Agency of Iran, monitored in Nicosia, quoted officials of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) as saying that another eight officers and soldiers were captured in the fighting Saturday in the Kalija region in the eastern sector of oil-rich Kirkuk province.

The leftist PUK, one of the main Kurdish rebel movements, gave no indications of its own casualties in the latest clashes with the Iraqi army.

The fighting erupted March 5 around Chamchamal, 60 kilometres east of Kirkuk city.

The leftist PUK said it launched the offensive against the Iraqi military headquarters in Kalija Friday night.

There was no independent confirmation of the battle or any comment from Baghdad.

But Iraq did acknowledge last Tuesday that its forces had fought "defensive actions" against the PUK around Chamchamal, the first admission the military was involved in fighting against the Kurds in two years.

Over the last week, the PUK claims to have killed or captured hundreds of Iraqi soldiers and says many more have defected or deserted.

Chamchamal lies below the 36th Parallel, which is the southern boundary of the self-rule Kurdish enclave and the "no-fly zone" enforced by the United States and its allies since April 1991 to protect the rebels.

They claim Iraq seeks a new confrontation with the United Nations to force the Security Council to lift devastating trade sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Over the last few weeks, Kurdish officials have claimed the Iraqis have been building up their forces in northern Iraq for an offensive against the PUK.

They claim Iraq seeks a new confrontation with the United Nations to force the Security Council to lift devastating trade sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Summit fails to answer questions

(Continued from page 1)

available the means of (their) implementation."

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia called for developing countries to be allowed to play a role in the decision-making bodies that dominate the world economy, such as the G-7 industrialised countries (Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States).

Structural adjustment policies should have "a more human face," she said, referring to the austerity policies which the IMF and World Bank have forced upon a large number of developing nations.

Cuban President Fidel Castro denounced the "irresponsibility of the system," citing as proof the fact that "unemployment cannot be reduced" in industrialised countries.

The week of meetings Copenhagen — five days intense debate over the 8 page declaration — brought just two token gestures: debt relief and a U.S. plan to re-allocate \$100 million education funds to be sold for girls' education.

The Copenhagen Declaration itself was criticised by many Third World delegates for failing to provide financial resources or make firm commitments to tackle the problem of developing countries' debt, estimated at nearly \$2 billion.

Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Ramussen, leading the summit, told assembled leaders they "living in a world of acceptable contradictions and urged rich countries start acting."

Kabariti

(Continued from page 1)

The message, delivered by Canadian ambassador to Jordan, Andrew Robinson, stressed Canada's keenness to support refugees' and displaced persons' issues at various levels.

The Canadian minister stressed Canada's appreciation of Jordanian steps taken to bring about peace to the region.

كندا مع الأصل

Clinton picks New York investment banker to head World Bank

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton nominated investment banker James Wolfensohn Saturday as the next president of the World Bank to succeed the ailing Lewis Preston.

Mr. Clinton said in a statement he will ask the bank's board of directors to confirm the nomination of Mr. Wolfensohn, 61, who is president and chief executive officer of James D. Wolfensohn, Inc. of New York.

He also has served as chairman of the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington since 1990, without pay, in an attempt to rescue the financially troubled arts facility.

"James Wolfensohn had already had an extraordinary career in finance and public service, spanning four decades and three continents," Mr. Clinton said.

"At a time when the role and mission of and funding for the World Bank and other

international financial institutions are major issues, the deep respect Jim Wolfensohn already enjoys will allow him to serve as a forceful advocate for the bank and development issues," he added.

Mr. Wolfensohn was not immediately available for comment.

Mr. Clinton also praised outgoing bank president Preston, 68, who announced last month he has cancer. He cited his leadership of the World Bank, which "is playing a major, constructive role in regions such as the Middle East, Russia and the former Soviet Union."

In a statement, Mr. Preston welcomed Mr. Wolfensohn's nomination, saying: "He has proven himself to be a strong leader, and there is no doubt that the bank will prosper in his able hands."

The World Bank post pays \$190,000 a year, with a \$95,000 expense allowance.

By tradition, the U.S. government names the head of the Washington-based World Bank and the nomination is ratified by the bank's executive directors.

The multilateral World Bank is the largest source of non-commercial capital for developing nations and lends more than \$20 billion a year. Its critics say that it is a huge bureaucracy that tramples on the social and environmental needs of its debtors.

Americans have held the presidency since the bank was established by the Allied powers to help rebuild Europe in the aftermath of World War II.

Mr. Wolfensohn previously was an executive partner of Salomon Brothers in New York and chairman of Salomon Brothers International in London, and managing director of Darling and Company in Australia.

He has also served on a number of boards, including

the Rockefeller Foundation, CBS Incorporated, the Population Council, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the Business Council for Sustainable Development, Continental Grain and Carnegie Hall Corporation.

A naturalised U.S. citizen born in Sydney, Australia, Mr. Wolfensohn took up fencing at 18 and within five years became Australian national champion. He was a member of Australia's fencing team in the 1956 Olympics.

He was educated at the University of Sydney and graduated from the Harvard University Business School. He served in the Royal Australian Air Force before entering the investment banking field.

He is also an accomplished cellist who performed at Carnegie Hall to mark his 50th birthday.

Rich countries will hound poor over labour laws—Dunkel

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Rich countries will persist in trying to protect their trade from poor countries, notably over rules applying to cheap labour, the architect of the new regime of world free has said.

"Protectionism will go on trying to find its way into world markets, it will use every cover available," Arthur Dunkel, former director-general of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), now the World Organisation, told a world trade seminar.

He added that the latest example of protectionism was a social clause proposed by developed countries to link world trade with issues such as labour standards in developing countries — including child and prison labour.

Such a clause could restrict or prohibit imports from countries which did not adhere to universal standards, restraining the exports of developing nations, he said.

Mr. Dunkel, a controversial figure in India who has been burned in effigy at numerous protests by critics of the GATT accord, said that there was "no way to

evacuate the problem by sweeping it under the carpet."

"The trading community will have to come to grips with them in order to ensure that public opinion and legislators around the world are not trapped in demagogic arguments," the Swiss economist said.

Advocates of the clause say it is needed to ensure that social issues keep pace with economic progress. Failing to institute such safeguards, they say, would be tantamount to collaborating in the exploitation of workers in developing countries.

The clause is also designed to ensure fair trade by preventing developing countries from gaining unfair advantages through cheap labour.

Poor nations have argued that the trade advantage is already tilted heavily in favour of rich countries which enjoy superior technology and economies of scale and access to finance.

The social clause would make Third World producers even less competitive, they fear.

"We have to tackle the problem," Mr. Dunkel said, calling for a "clear-cut definition" of the issues at stake for

a solution to be thrashed out.

He said he personally preferred the issue to be handled by a specialist agency such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), but said there was no way that parties to the WTO could escape tackling it.

Indian industrialist Govind Hari Singhania said at the seminar that the emergence of such non-trade issues as labour on the world trade stage were "highly detrimental to the growth of the multilateral spirit."

"These are major areas of concern for us," Mr. Singhania said. Non-tariff barriers had greater potential to distort trade flows than tariffs, he said.

Mr. Dunkel said that the world trade accord signed in December in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh had created "good chances" for merchandise trade being subject to a single instrument of protection — customs duties.

But, Mr. Dunkel said, "there are a host of policies and practices that distort competition in world markets, and we all know that each national market is part and parcel of the world market of others."

Iran for end to dollar-linked oil pricing — paper

TEHRAN (R) — Iran backs a proposal to review the policy of linking crude oil prices to the dollar, an Iranian newspaper reported Sunday, quoting a commentary on Iran's state-run radio.

The dollar plunged to record lows against the Japanese yen and the German mark last week, undercutting the buying power of Iran's petrodollars in its major import markets.

"Iran backs a proposal aimed at protecting the economies of oil exporting nations against potential fluctuations in the value of the U.S. dollar," the daily Iran News quoted a commentary by Iran Radio on Saturday as saying.

Oil producing nations should revise the pricing system "to avoid further retardation of their progress due to links with America's crisis-stricken economy," the radio said.

The English-language paper said a "recent call by the United Arab Emirates to consider pricing changes after the dollar's sharp fall was similar to one of Iran's longstanding demands."

UAE's minister of state for finance and industrial affairs, Ahmad Bin Humaid Al Tayer, in remarks that do not necessarily reflect government policy, urged the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to revise its dollar-pegged oil pricing system.

"Pricing of raw materials can be done through a basket of currencies... or through selling the exports of developing states."

U.S., Cuba clash at U.N. summit on market economics

COPENHAGEN (R) — The United States and Cuba clashed over market economics at the United Nations Social Summit Sunday, setting out contrasting visions of how the world can best tackle poverty and unemployment.

But on the last day of the week-long gathering, all 120 countries represented in Copenhagen were set to approve a declaration and an action plan to ward off social explosion as the world moves into the 21st century.

Vice President Al Gore, insisting that Washington would maintain foreign aid despite pressures from the new Congress to cut it, said the United States believed free markets alone could guarantee permanent economic advance around the globe.

But Cuba's President Fidel Castro, casting aside his usual olive-green fatigues for a dark business suit and matching tie, said there could be no social development "where chaos and anarchy reign under the blind and savage laws of the market."

The "neo-liberal doctrine" being imposed on the world since the fall of Soviet communism, he said, "sacrifices shamelessly in the underdeveloped countries spending in health, education, culture, sport, social security, cheap housing and other basic needs of the people."

The conference, the Summit for Social Development, has been told that there are more than one billion people living in poverty around the world and 120 million — well over one third of the global work force — unemployed or under-employed.

Speakers from both developed and developing countries have warned that unless these people are given some hope for a better future, disaster lay ahead.

"The widening gap between rich and poor is more explosive than ideological differences," President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya said.

"There can be no economic stability or security in society without social justice," said Swiss Social Democratic Party leader Hanspeter Schmid.

He said the social dimension of development and justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among our nations.

And in the action plan covering everything from employment to health, education and basic human rights, they pledge to cut the debt burden of developing nations, find new financial resources and focus aid on social programmes.

The documents have been condemned as ineffective by hundreds of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and pressure groups who also came to Copenhagen and issued their own counter-declaration calling for much more radical

action.

And many of the presidents and prime ministers who have spoken have also expressed underlying scepticism on whether the promises in the non-binding plan will be fulfilled.

"We must highlight our responsibility to translate rhetoric into commitment, sympathy into policy, and compassion into action," Philippines President Fidel Ramos said Sunday.

Speaking for the European Union, Commission President Jacques Santer struck a more optimistic note, saying he hoped history would record that the gathering had not been a "North-South summit."

"On the contrary, it will be a decisive summit for the world," he said.

And he welcomed what he said was the agreement that a "social dimension" would be written into rules and attitudes guiding the work of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in determining their aid policies.

President Castro, who some diplomats had feared might upstage the gathering by announcing he could not support the final documents, disappointed radical Danish leftists by telling them on Saturday that he would endorse the summit's conclusions.

He argued that the common element uniting all countries present was the recognition that poverty had to be tackled. This was a good start that could be built on, he told the radicals, some of whom booed him.

China, U.S. sign copyright agreement

BEIJING (AFP) — China and the United States Saturday signed a landmark agreement on the protection of intellectual property rights but failed to resolve their dispute over extending market access and China's entry to the WTO.

U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor and Chinese Foreign Trade Minister Wu Yi signed the agreement after signing the copyright agreement, forged after a sanctions deadline lapsed last month.

Mr. Wu said the deal marked a "turning point" in bilateral ties.

Under the agreement, China is to abolish import restrictions on audio-visual and publishing product imports, while permitting U.S. firms to set up joint ventures for audio-visual production and contract with Chinese firms for nationwide distribution.

The official Xinhua news agency quoted Mr. Kantor as saying the agreement was "a hopeful sign" that the two sides could overcome difficulties through their joint efforts.

The accord was a "good one" and "both sides are winners," he was quoted as saying.

But behind the friendly words, wide differences on the issue of market access came into sharp focus.

Russia plans to increase gold production, lure finance

MOSCOW (R) — Russia plans to increase gold output by the year 2000, but crucial investment largely depends on development of a domestic gold market, senior gold industry officials said Saturday.

The head of the State Precious Metals Committee, Yevgeny Bychkov, said a development programme would be presented to government experts on March 15.

"We have great hopes for this programme. It should increase our potential," he told a news conference.

Mr. Bychkov, speaking after a presentation by Russia's new Gold Club, gave no figures. But the Sevodnya newspaper said planned output this year was 149 tonnes, up from 131.9 tonnes in 1994.

"Gold production has been stable for three years," Mr. Bychkov said. "The main task now is attracting investment."

Mr. Bychkov said the Gold Club, set up late last year to oversee creation of a domestic market, would play a key role in attracting finance from Russian and foreign commercial banks.

"We have to create certain conditions in order to attract the banks," he said, referring to a draft presidential decree that might govern the domestic market until a new precious metals law is passed by

parliament.

Gold Club President Mikhail Bazhanov said the main priority was to lay legal foundations for the circulation of gold within Russia as a financial instrument, as collateral for credits or securities.

"In this way, we shall be supporting gold production," he said. "We must introduce the necessary laws on gold and precious metals circulation and on the circulation of securities."

As part of a financial structure, it should be subject to a special tax regime or, as in other countries, not be taxed at all.

The Gold Club groups about 40 Russian commercial banks, gold producers and refiners, but membership is expected to grow.

The Russian Central Bank has licensed about 100 banks to deal in precious metals and the first operations are starting, ending a decades-old state monopoly on the gold trade.

The state needs help from the private investment to pay producers for gold. Last year, the state was unable to buy about 60 tonnes and provide necessary resources to producers.

Finance Ministry official Anatoly Golovaty said this

gold would be circulating between commercial banks if Russia had "a civilised gold market."

Mr. Bazhanov said the aim of the Gold Club was to support production through introduction of such a market.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY MARCH 13, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Richter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Discuss ideas with others whether close at hand or at a distance and come to a meeting of the minds this morning. Make new and valuable contacts.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can see how to add abundance via some new system that is practical and workable today. Get the OK of loved ones before you proceed if they are among your investors.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Discuss a new plan with partners this morning which will bring you more mutual success in the future. A paper matter will also benefit you in a current project.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Show appreciation to those who have done you many a favour. Do exercises that will improve your health and that will help you relieve any pressures.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A special thought for a loved one or mate brings good results. Avoid one who has a bad temper today and could do you harm both physically and emotionally.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) There is new money coming your way now. Seek the advice of experts on how best to use it. Social life will be best in the evening for you and your mate.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Delve into loftier philosophical studies which can benefit you greatly this morning. This can be a particularly happy day and evening for everyone around you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Concentrate on improving your financial position so you need not worry so much. Add to present possessions today and get estimates for your possessions you have.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can gain almost anything you desire now. Get into some group activity later today and get good results from your efforts.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Contact experts to make fine new plans for the future so that you can become more happy and successful. Get closer to a relative or mate this evening.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Use your intuition and all is easier for you than usual. Be your gregarious self today and get fine results and personal matters.

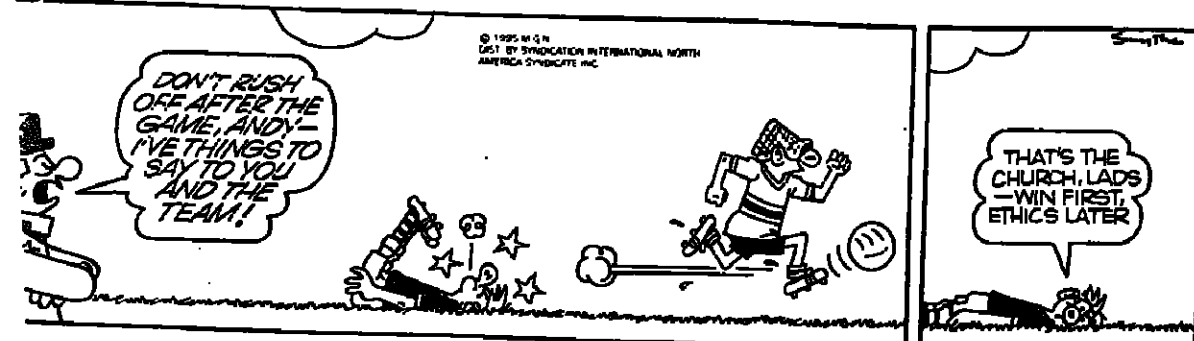
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Try to please a big wig now and you get their support. Plan how best to improve conditions in community matters to your favour. You're going to get some help.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

Peanuts



Andy Capp



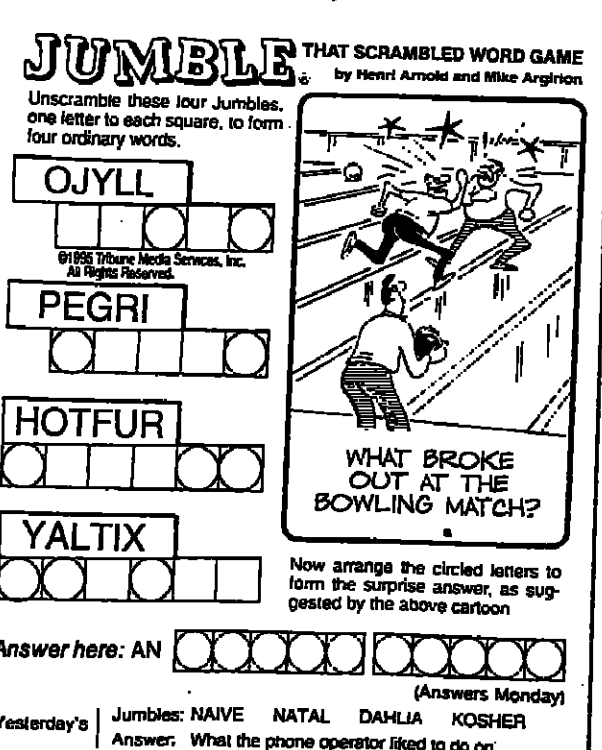
Itt'n'Jeff



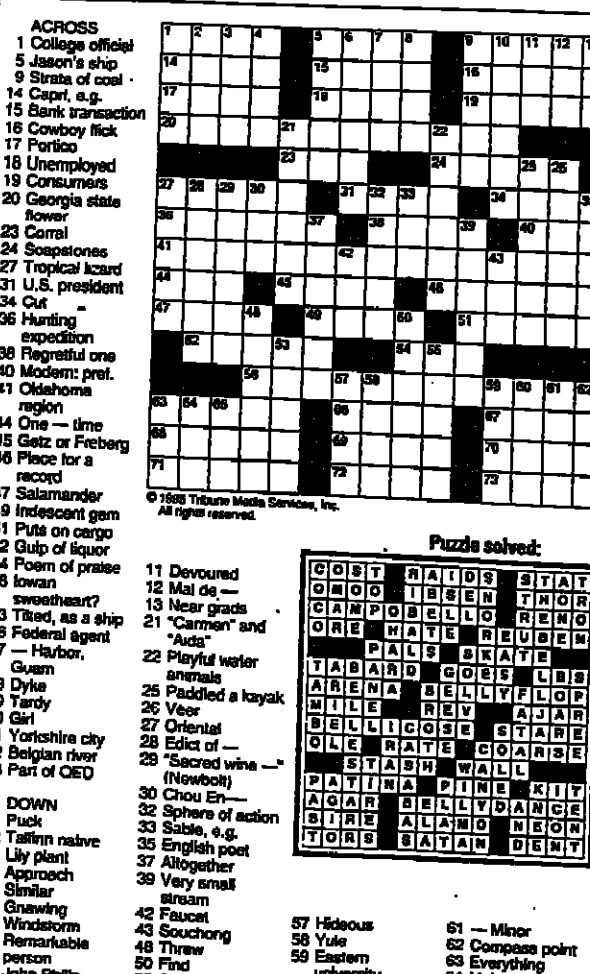
THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword



Business Daily Beat

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Road 'tolls' on the way

★ ACCORDING to a senior official at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the Kingdom's roads need maintenance at a cost of JD 60 million whereas the budget allocates only JD 5 million for this project. He said the ministry is conducting a statistical field study on the transportation sector in order to improve the roads network. Based on the study, the ministry will prepare a detailed report recommending the collection of tolls on highways used by transit vehicles and will request the government that the proceeds be given to the ministry to carry out the necessary road maintenance. The official said that the tariff will be specified for various roads on the green light is given by the government. He added that preliminary views point to implementing the toll scheme on: Zarqa-Ghor Hadithah road, Aqaba-Maan, Al-Jarrah, Zarqa-Iraqi border, Amman road and the Bridge between the Syrian highway borders. The statistics and the study will be completed by mid-April '95 (Al-Dustour).

★ THE MINISTER of interior banned trucks from using the Zarqa-Ghor Hadithah road describing it as a vital tourist highway which was not basically designed for heavy vehicles (Al-Rai).

★ MICHEL NAZZAL, president of the Jordanian Hotels Society, said there were about 5,000 hotel rooms with 10,000 beds throughout the Kingdom while in Irbid alone, there were more than 6,000 rooms. He added that the Israelis were planning to raise the number of hotel rooms in Irbid to 10,000 whereas the number of rooms in Aqaba did not exceed the 1,000 mark (Al-Dustour).

★ THE MAJORITY of water wells in Amman are not licensed to sell drinking water. Only two applications have been received for licensing although there are thirty private water wells in the Amman Governorate. There is a total of 61 private water wells all over Jordan. According to the law, it is forbidden for anyone to sell or transport water without a prior written approval. Owners of water wells are required to pay an annual JD 500 fee to the Water Authority (Al-Rai).

★ Ready-Mix Concrete and Construction Supplies Company is offering 750,000 shares at a JD 1 par value, for public subscription starting March 20 until April 10, 1995. The firm, registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, on Feb. 4, 1995 as a public shareholding company with a JD 3 million capital, aims at setting up and managing factories to make and trade in ready-mix concrete, curb stones and bricks. The company also aims at setting up housing projects for limited-income people. Main founders of the company are: Jawdat Makram and Raja Al Alami (JD 100,000 each), Jordan National Bank, the Arab Bank and the National Portfolio Securities (JD 100,000 each), UDEEL Enterprises Ltd (a British firm - JD 100,000), Edward Bawab of Jordan and Business Bank (JD 50,000), Fares Muasher (JD 50,000), Tewfik Fakhoury (JD 50,000) and Nasri Khoury (JD 50,000). The total number of founders was 127 accounting for a JD 2,250,000 equity. Only 25 per cent of the value of the share should be paid upon subscribing with the rest to be paid over the coming four years. The capital will go mainly to finance the cost of mixers, pumps and other equipment estimated at JD 1.34 million and to operational expenses (JD 1.02 million) (Al-Rai).

★ The Jordan Electric Power Company requests all subscribers to pay their electricity bills within one week from today. The company will disconnect the power lines of all defaulters (Al-Rai).

Gulf gold consumption falls through weak demand from Saudis

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — Lower demand in Saudi Arabia depressed gold consumption in the Gulf by nearly 10 per cent in 1994 but it is expected to pick up in 1995, the World Gold Council (WGC) has said.

Overall consumption of the yellow metal in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stood at around 207.2 tonnes in 1994 compared with 232.7 tonnes in 1993, said Pedro Bertran, WGC Middle East and India manager.

"The demand for 1994 in the Gulf area was lower than the 1993 demand level due to the softening of demand in Saudi Arabia," he said in a statement.

"However, the significant increase in demand in Saudi Arabia in the last quarter as compared with demand in the first, second and third quarters of 1994 provides room for optimism for stimulation in demand in 1995," he added.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — are

among the biggest gold consumers in the world because of strong demand from women and the high per capita income.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, has emerged as the largest gold market in the Middle East, with an estimated consumption of 174 tonnes in 1994 compared with 200 tonnes in 1993.

The UAE emirate of Dubai, the Middle East's main transshipment centre, is one of the biggest gold importers in the world. Imports totalled 257.1 tonnes in 1994 compared with 227.9 tonnes in 1993 while consumption grew by around two per cent to 33.2 tonnes from 32.7 tonnes in the same period.

Dubai has a population of around 600,000 but a large part of its gold imports is re-exported to India, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Pakistan, other Asian countries and the former Soviet Union.

WGC figures showed Gulf gold consumption accounted for nearly 8.5 per cent of the total world demand of 2,442.9 tonnes in 1994.

Iraqi oil reserve figures baffle Western oilmen

BAGHDAD (R) — Western oilmen, taking part in an oil conference here, are treating Iraq's recent forecasts for future crude production and reserves with caution.

"Anyone would salivate over such figures. But figures are something and real business is something else," said a Western participant who declined to be named.

"There are also a number of things which, arithmetically, cannot be correct," the expert added. He did not elaborate.

Oil Minister Safa Hadi Jawad told more than 250 energy specialists Saturday that Iraq had giant undeveloped oilfields that could produce more than 4.5 million barrels per day (b/d).

But Mr. Jawad also said Iraq needed \$25 billion to revitalize its upstream oil industry over the next five to eight years.

He said Iraq possessed at least 112 billion barrels of proven reserves and 214 billion of probable reserves.

"If statements by OPEC members on reserves and production figures are all valid, (the) price will go to nothing," the Western specialist said.

Baghdad diplomats said in rebuilding its oil industry, Iraq would first face an uphill battle in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to regain the 3.14 million b/d quota it had before it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Mr. Jawad said in a television interview last week that two million b/d of Iraq's lost market share were now being produced by Saudi Arabia, its diehard foe since the 1991 war.

"It would be hard to persuade a country to relinquish part of the quota it fought so hard for," said one diplomat.

Iraq's oil exports have been blocked after it invaded Kuwait. The U.N. Security Council will review the sanctions Monday but no change is expected.

Tashtan Revi of the British trading and shipping firm Ganoil said British oil companies in the conference were taking Mr. Jawad's figures seriously.

"They cannot just sit and wait," he said, noting the strong presence of British oil firms in Iraq in the past.

Tom Earls of the Irish firm Aran Energy said many of the Western specialists would refrain from taking any decisions before going back to their base countries. "We need to go back and check," he said.

He said as long as Iraq remained outside international markets everything said or done here would be "speculation."

"The market is volatile and it is good for speculators. When the embargo is lifted we will all know the truth," he added.

There are no representatives from U.S. firms in the conference, but half a dozen U.S. journalists and a consultant, Tom Stauffer, attend the meetings.

"U.S. companies would have liked to come but Clintonites have prevented

them. We are potentially losing out to our competitors," Mr. Stauffer said.

Mr. Stauffer said he worked for several U.S. oil firms which he refused to name. "It is too late for the U.S. This is something that we should worry about," he said.

Asked to comment on the figures given by Mr. Jawad, Mr. Stauffer said: "It is not impossible. Potential reserves here are so large. There are some splendid oilfields here to be developed."

He said the Americans thought Iraq was "unreasonable in negotiations. But Venezuela has a bad record and U.S. firms do business there. Opportunities here are better."

Gennadi Temnov, vice-president of the Russian Kond-Petroleum, said Iraq had asked his company to develop three oilfields and feasibility studies were under way.

Shanghai reportedly provides best foreign investment opportunity in China

SHANGHAI (AFP) — China's eastern metropolis Shanghai is the country's best developed city for foreign investment, according to the results of a China Industry and Commerce Association survey.

Shanghai, where total contracted foreign investment reached a record \$10 billion in 1994, led the booming southern city of Guangzhou and the Shenzhen special economic zone, the Shanghai Securities News said.

Last year, 3,802 foreign-funded projects were approved, up 4.2 per cent from 1993.

Other leading cities, in order, included Dalian, Beijing, Zhuhai, Qingdao, Xiamen and Ningbo, said the survey, conducted with the Beijing Retail Market Survey Co.

Most of these cities are situated along China's eastern coast, where the pace of development outstrips inland provinces.

Shanghai Vice Mayor Zhao Qizheng, who is also the director of the city's Pudong New Area Administration Committee, was quoted as saying the municipality owed its success to other Chinese cities that had invested in its development.

"Pudong's development is the result of support from the

whole country," he was quoted by the Wenhui daily as saying.

The Pudong area in the Shanghai's east has received central government approval to develop into a major finance and trade zone.

Mr. Zhao compared the business zone to a "football field that only needed a qualified team to play on it."

"After five years, construction is almost complete in Pudong," he said. "From now on we will change the focus from construction to more operations."

In his government work report, Premier Li Peng said China would "continue to develop the special economic zones and the new Pudong District in Shanghai, giving full play to the role of the coastal open cities and areas."

The survey, which polled some 2,400 foreign businessmen with operations in 39 Chinese cities, rated the investment climate according to the availability of a qualified work force, supply and distribution of goods, and telecommunications.

Many respondents said more work needed to be done on telecommunications infrastructure, the newspaper said.

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (March 6 - March 10, 1995)

AMMAN — The dollar witnessed major fluctuations against other major currencies last week, especially against the mark. It ended the week 3.56 per cent lower against the yen, 0.78 per cent lower against the mark and 3.41 per cent higher against sterling.

The U.S. unit declined sharply against other major currencies Monday 6/3/1995, as the dollar continued its decline that began at the end of the previous week. The dollar's decline came on the back of the sharp rise of the mark against the European currencies; in addition to dealers' worries that the U.S. president plan to extend loans to Mexico at the end of last January might limit the U.S. treasury's capability to support the dollar.

The dollar continued its depreciation against other major currencies Tuesday, setting new post World War II records against the mark and the yen. Despite the sharp decline in the dollar, the Federal Reserve (Fed) and foreign central banks refrained from intervening in the market, which contributed to the dollar's decline. Meanwhile, analysts indicated that growing expectations that an increase in German interest rates sooner than expected was a major obstacle against the dollar.

The dollar appreciated against other major currencies Wednesday, however, after officials in the European and American monetary authorities, expressed their concern over the deterioration of the dollar. A Bundesbank member indicated that a cut in the German interest rates were possible if the dollar continues to decline. Comments by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, before the Congress also contributed to the dollar rise. Mr. Greenspan told the Congress that it was important to keep the U.S. currency stable, and that the Fed would not hesitate tightening its monetary policy if necessary.

The dollar continued its appreciation against the mark and the yen Thursday, following increased speculation that the Mexican government would have to undertake certain measures to stabilise the economy.

On Friday, the dollar continued its rise against the mark and sterling, while stabilising against the yen. Reports indicated that trading sought direction, rumours, and uncertainty were spread over the market. Analysts also indicated that February unemployment report and comments by Federal Reserve chairman and treasury secretary had little effect in the dollar exchange rates. The U.S. non-farm payrolls rose by 318 thousand in February, compared to a rise of 134 thousand in January, prompting the unemployment rate to decline from 5.7 per cent to 5.4 per cent. Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, indicated before the Congress that Mexico was implementing an appropriate stringent monetary policy, while Mr. Greenspan, doubted that the Mexican financial crisis was a major factor in the dollar's decline.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.4125 marks, 90.90 yen and at \$1.5740 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	5/3/1995	10/3/1995	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.6295	1.5740	13.41%
Deutsche Mark	1.4235	1.4125	0.78%
Swiss Franc	1.2010	1.1797	1.81%
French Franc	5.0170	5.0455	(0.56)%
Japanese Yen	94.14	96.90	3.56%

USD per STG

Zero-Currency Interest Rates

Currency	1/3/1995	1/3/1995	10/3/1995	10/3/1995
U.S. Dollar	6.06	6.62	6.62	6.62
Sterling Pound	7.40	7.68	6.34	7.75
Deutsche Mark	4.87	5.60	4.81	5.43
Swiss Franc	3.50	4.31	3.50	4.19
French Franc	6.18	6.87	8.12	7.50
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.43	2.18	2.37

Source: Reuters, bid rates, bid amounts, extending U.S. Dollars, 1,000,000 or equivalent.

General Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 12/3/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6890	0.6910
Sterling Pound	1.0837	1.0891
Deutsche Mark	0.4877	0.4901
Swiss Franc	0.5846	0.5875
French Franc	0.1365	0.1372
Japanese Yen	0.7555	0.7593
Dutch Guilder	0.4344	0.4366
Swedish Krona	0.0409	0.0417
Italian Lira	0.0409	0.0417
Belgian Franc	0.0409	0.0417

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World Figure Skating Championships

Bobek's tears lead to bronze

BIRMINGHAM (AP) — U.S. champion Nicole Bobek fell down twice, hung her head at the end of her routine and left the ice in tears. Still, she was good enough to win the bronze medal Saturday at the World Figure Skating Championships.

Bobek, the 17-year-old problem child-turned-ice princess, had an improbable gold within her grasp after winning Friday's short programme. Instead, she was overtaken by a smooth and stylish performance from Chen Lu, who became the first Chinese skater ever to win a world title.

"It wasn't my best performance," said Bobek, who crashed to the ice after a triple loop and a triple salchow. "I was upset that I did miss those two jumps. They were very easy jumps for me."

Having blown a chance for the gold, Bobek then had to sweat it out through the last four skaters. Then came the joy of realising she'd hung for a place on the podium.

"This has helped a lot," she said. "I've proved to a lot of people that all this stuff written about me didn't affect me, and I think that's what they wanted it to do."

Moments after Bobek skated, her American teammate Michelle Kwan was also crying at the end of her programme. But these were tears of joy for a spotless performance that lifted Kwan to fourth and signaled that the 14-year-old skater would, like Bobek, be a title contender for years to come.

"There was nothing I could have done better," said Kwan, who was fifth after the short. "It was overwhelming with everybody standing and clapping and waving. It was unbelievable."

In the quirky world of figure skating scoring, it was ironic that Kwan's performance actually took the silver

away from Bobek. Kwan finished one place ahead of Bobek in the free skate, knocking her teammate down the one vital position that was just enough to improve France's Surya Bonaly to second overall.

"I think her for helping me," said Bonaly, smiling. Bonaly, the five-time European champion and pre-competition favourite, blew her chance for the gold with a flawed performance in the short that left her fourth. But on Saturday, the 21-year-old French skater roared back with her usual lightning-bolt of energy and brute athleticism, hitting seven triple jumps in a routine to gypsy music.

The performance of the day, however, belonged to Chen. Wearing a red dress, the 18-year-old Chinese skater hit four triples in her programme to "The Last Emperor" soundtrack. But her smooth liners and elegant tracing were even more impressive, reflected in nothing but 5.8s and 5.9s for artistic impression.

Bobek's performance all week showed nerves of steel behind a school-girl smile. Having failed to qualify as a relative unknown last year, she came back this time to win her qualifying group on Monday as well as Friday's short.

A self-described free spirit with a distaste for training and a reputation for going astray on foreign skating trips, Bobek went through eight coaches in eight years before signing on with Richard Callaghan last summer.

Callaghan introduced a strict practice regimen, which paid off with a shock victory over Kwan at last month's U.S. nationals.

Then word leaked out that Bobek had entered a conditional plea of guilty in Janu-



Nicole Bobek of the U.S.

ary for home invasion of a fellow skater's house.

The case was dismissed because one of the conditions of Bobek's plea was that it not be made public. Her lawyer then alleged that a rival skater or former coach was behind the leak.

That led to media siege around Bobek's practice rink in Detroit. Bobek was shielded inside, her free-spirit attitude the perfect remedy to shake off the fuss.

"For a 17-year-old teenager, I think she's grown up fast and I think she's learned to focus and use some

strengths that she didn't know she had," Callaghan said. "Third in the world with two mistakes shows that, minus some mistakes, she's got a great future."

"She's changed completely from when I first started working with her in June," Callaghan said. "And I think she's a really different person on the ice and off the ice."

Bobek smiled as Callaghan praised her, the free spirit glowing from within.

"I'm still the same old Nicole," she said, flashing a mischievous grin. "Just grown up a bit."

Chen strikes gold at last

BIRMINGHAM (R) — When a foot injury forced Chen Lu out of last year's world figure skating championship in Japan, the doctor advised her to take six months off and have an operation.

Without surgery, he said, she might have to stop skating for up to a year.

That was too much for Chen to take, so she sought a second opinion.

In Beijing, a Chinese doctor treated the stress fracture of her right instep, kept her off the ice for a month and said surgery would not be necessary.

By the end of last April, Chen had joined the busy world tour of Olympic and world champions. She did not have the operation, nor did she stop skating. And now she is world champion, the first for China in the sport.

Chen captured the title in a tight battle with Surya Bonaly of France on Saturday, winning on a countback after neither had a majority of first place votes from the nine judges.

Her victory was a long time coming after first taking bronze at the 1992 World Championships in Oakland, California. A year later she was third again as Oksana Baiul won the gold medal.

And at last year's Lillehammer Olympics, Chen had to settle for third once more. Then the injury prevented her from capitalising on the absence in Japan of the two who had beaten her in Norway, Baiul and Nancy Kerrigan.

She said she felt "quiet lucky" after Saturday's triumph.

"I worked hard and this is my result from that hard work. It is not only the first time for me but for China and that has great significance to me," said Chen.

The work began as a small child for Chen, who grew up



Chinese skater Chen Lu displays her gold medal (AFP photo)

in the hard winters of Changchun City in the remote Jilin Province.

There are just three ice rinks in the province and only one near her home, though the city has a population of a million.

Chen began skating in the crowded rink at the age of five, encouraged by a mother who was a successful table tennis player and father who played ice hockey.

Her coach, Li Mingzhu, discovered her when she was 10, by which time she was already doing triple jumps. Li found her very talented

and hard working and by the age of 12 she had won the first of her seven successive national titles. She won the world junior crown in 1990 when she was 14.

Chen spends most of each year training in Beijing and much of each day on the ice, with an extra hour devoted to physical conditioning and studying dance.

By nature she is quiet, claim and shy.

Though 18, she is, in coach Li's words, "still a child. She has not thought at all about what she wants to do when she stops skating."

Graf, Martinez reach final

DELRAY BEACH (Agencies) — Three-time defending champion Steffi Graf worked her way into the final of the \$430,000 Delray Beach women's tournament, while second seed Conchita Martinez advanced Saturday without a worry.

The top-seeded Graf took 69 minutes to defeat fellow-German and third-seeded Anke Huber 6-4 6-4.

Martinez spent a brief six minutes on court when her opponent, fourth-seeded Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands, retired from the match with a left thigh muscle injury she suffered in Friday's quarter-final.

The Spaniard was serving in the second game of the first set, leading 1-0, when the 15th-ranked Schultz quit the match.

Prior to the match, there was speculation about who would be left standing in the Martinez-Schultz match since the Spaniard had also sustained an injury, to her leg, hip, in her Friday quarter-final.

Schultz became the latest in a string of casualties at this event. Ten other players who were supposed to compete here called in sick with a variety of medical problems.

Graf, who benefitted from the sick-out when Barbara Rittner of Germany defaulted in their quarterfinal, maintained her untarnished record against Huber by posting her eighth successive victory against her.

"I'm a little stiff when I play her because I want the match a little too much," Huber said. "Maybe I have too much respect for her."

Graf, however, is longer feels her status bothers Huber.

"In the beginning, the first couple of matches I played, I could feel that," Graf said. "I don't think that's any longer in the last two or three years. We both play pretty similar, but I'm a little bit more patient."

Both players had difficulty working through the windy conditions, but Graf showed greater mental strength. In the first set, Graf broke serve at 0-40 in the fifth game when Huber made three errors in a row and Graf beated a winning backhand return.

Graf went ahead, 3-0 in the second set, but Huber managed to recoup some service break at 15-40 in the fourth game. Graf failed to capitalise on two match points she had on Huber's serve in the ninth game, but served out the match at 40-30 with a winning forehand in the 10th game.

Schultz said she felt all right until Martinez pulled her wide on the forehand side in the middle of the second game. That strategy severely tested the Dutchwoman's injury.

"I stretched for that forehand and almost fell to the ground," Schultz said.

Martinez, whose only victory in 10 tries against Graf came in their last encounter at the 1993 Sims of Philadelphia, said her injury seems to have improved.

"It's actually recovered really good," Martinez said of her hip. "It's much better, but it would have been worse if I was playing. This gives me another day of rest and will help me tomorrow."

Connors, Borg advance In Naples, Florida — Jimmy Connors, Bjorn Borg and Jose-Luis Clerc earned semifinal berths in the eleven Masters 33-and-over tennis championships Friday.

Borg used consistent ground strokes and his patented passing shots to defeat John Lloyd 6-4, 6-4.

Earlier, Connors defeated Roscoe Tanner 6-3, 6-1, and Clerc knocked off Guillermo Vilas 6-2, 7-6 (7-1). The wins set up the \$300,000 season-ending battle Friday of the top eight performers on the Champions Tour.

Connors broke tanner in the seventh game of the first set to take the lead. He won eight of the next nine games, finishing off Tanner in a match lasting 68 minutes.

In the second match, Clerc had little trouble with Vilas in the first set but couldn't manage a break in the second set. Clerc dominated in the tiebreak.

After the match, Vilas was diagnosed with a strained back and was forced to withdraw from the doubles portion of the tournament.

Pele causes commotion at Pan Am Olympic village

MAR DEL PLATA, Argentina (AP) — Brazilians have a saying that even an old king never loses his majesty. Just ask Pele.

The retired "king" of soccer got a regal reception when he paid a surprise visit Saturday to the compound of the Brazilian delegation at the Pan American Games.

Athletes, diplomats, chambermaids, security guards and journalists dropped everything and rushed to have their photo taken with the world's greatest soccer star. Pele graciously attended them all.

"I keep thinking that it won't happen, that it's all in the past. But I still get a thrill with the attention," he said.

Pele, 54, retired as a player in 1977, but now he is more active than ever in a new role, as Brazil's cabinet-level minister of sports.

"I lost status," he joked. "I stopped being a king and dropped to minister."

Pele arrived Friday in this seaside resort city, hoping to see the Brazilian soccer team's opening game against Costa Rica. But he got in late and had to watch Brazil's 2-0 victory on television.

He praised the play of the young squad, a second-string team of players under 20. The 'A' team will play in the World Junior Championships in Nigeria.

"Brazil has lots of quality players, enough to form three or four national teams," he said.

Pele plans to step up sports exchanges and cooperation with neighbour — and traditional rival — Argentina, especially in preparation for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

The idea is shared by Argentine president Carlos Menem, a sports enthusiast who put up Pele at his beach house on the outskirts of this city.

And Pele has lots more ideas that promise to shake up Brazilian sports. They range from finding private sponsors for amateur sports to breaking up what he called "dictatorships" in some sports federations, notably judo and basketball.

"I didn't join this team to lose," he said. "I plan to fulfill 100 per cent of what I set out to do."

To help him in that task, Pele said he has enlisted the help of top sports figures, including three-time formula one racing champion Nelson Piquet and former soccer star Sócrates.

What his ministry doesn't have, he said, is money.

"The first thing I learned as minister was: 'There's no budget yet,'" he said with a laugh.

Still, Pele expects to accomplish a lot simply with the contacts and prestige he built over the years. And he is plunging ahead with the irresistible impetus he once showed charging the enemy goal.

"Life is beginning now," he said.

Hornets sting Heat with 3-point barrage

CHARLOTTE (R) — The Hornets stung the Heat with a rash of three pointers on Saturday to extend their Central Division lead and inch closer to claiming the second best record in the Eastern Conference.

Hersey Hawkins and Dell Curry each made three-pointers in a game-breaking fourth quarter run as Charlotte made a team-record dozen long range hoops in beating Miami 104-95.

The win improved Charlotte to 39-22, increased their lead over Indiana to 1½ games in the Central and moved them within half a game of the Knicks in the struggle for second seeding in the playoffs behind the Orlando Magic.

Hawkins and Curry each connected from long range during a 10-4 spurt at the start of the fourth quarter that broke a 74-74 tie. Miami came no closer than three points thereafter.

"We have a lot of good shooters on this team. Anyone can get hot," Charlotte guard Muggsy Bogues said. "Lj (Larry Johnson), Dell (Curry) and Hawk (Hersey Hawkins) were stroking it tonight."

Curry finished 5-of-7 from three-point range, while Johnson connected on 3-of-4. Hawkins made 3-of-6 from long distance and Burrell made his only attempt. Larry Johnson scored 25 points and Alonzo Mourning and Curry had 21 points.

Glen Rice scored 28 points



Los Angeles Lakers centre Vlade Divac (left) fights for control of the ball as Chicago Bulls forward Toni Kukoc tries to recover it (AFP photo)

for Miami.

In New York, Shawn Kemp scored 22 points and grabbed 19 rebounds as the Seattle SuperSonics cruised to a 96-84 victory over the New York Knicks, who lost centre Patrick Ewing with a leg injury.

In Chicago, Sedale Threatt

quarter deficit in a 108-105 victory over the Chicago Bulls.

Anthony Peeler scored 22 points and Vlade Divac contributed 20 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists for the Lakers, who snapped a three-game losing streak by salvaging the finale of a four-game road trip.

Scottie Pippen scored a season-high 40 points for the Bulls, who had a three-game winning streak snapped. Chicago had won its last seven home games.

In Houston, Clyde Drexler scored 36 points and Hakeem Olajuwon added 34 points and 12 rebounds as the Rockets snapped a five-game losing streak with a 109-102 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

The Rockets were in danger of becoming the first defending NBA champion to lose six consecutive games the following season. Dallas' 102-101 win over Houston on February 28 started the Rockets' five-game skid.

"This is the kind of effort it's going to take every night," said Olajuwon.

"Clyde (Drexler) is a good player and you know that he's going to get his points. We are the kinds of players that can give you that almost every night. When you have a player like Clyde it makes things a lot easier on me."

RESULTS		
Charlotte	104	Miami 95
Washington	110	New Jersey 102
LA Lakers	108	Chicago 105
Houston	109	Dallas 102
Seattle	96	New York 84

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Alaisali lose 1-0 to Qatar's Al Arabi

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's Al Faisali Sunday lost their second match at the 5th Arab Cup Winner's Championship in Qatar when they were upset 1-0 by Qatar's Al Arabi. The loss put an end to Al Faisali's ambitions of advancing to the second round of the tournament as they also lost their opening match 1-0 to Egypt's Al Ahli. Al Faisali will next play Al Mustaqbal of Tunisia on Sunday.

The other four teams in the tournament are titleholders from Morocco, Al Qadissieh of Kuwait, Al Shabab Saudi Arabia and Palestine's Rafah.

Although Al Faisali totally dominated the match at the opening of the first half and had at least four definite scoring chances, Hasan Rashed stunned the Jordanian in when he scored Qatar's winning goal from a fast interattack in the 38th minute.

A minute later Subhi Awad was pushed in the penalty area but the Libyan referee chose not to award him a penalty.

Competition record

Eight teams took part in the inaugural competition which was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1989. Tunisia's Al Faisali won the title.

Ten teams participated in the 1991 championship which was held in the United Arab Emirates. Morocco's Olympic champions retained their crown.

Jeddah again hosted the championship in 1993. Jordan's Ramtha took part alongside six teams. Morocco's Olympic champions retained their crown.

The Qatari capital, Doha, hosted the competition in 1994 when 10 teams took part including Jordan's Al Faisali. Morocco's Olympic won the title for the third consecutive year.

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Indoor Athletics Championships

Bubka wins 4th career indoor gold

BARCELONA (AFP) — New kids on the block Geir Moen, Galina Astafei and mystery man Hicham El Guerrouj almost stole the show at the World Indoor Championships Saturday.

Only they forgot to tell Sergey Bubka — who excoriated his Barcelona ghost to add yet another title to his huge trophy collection.

Moen's win in the 200m, El Guerrouj's shock victory over Olympic champion Fernandinho in the 1,500m and Astafei's near-faultless display for her new country Germany suggested an overturning of the established order.

Bubka, however — who no-heighted at the Olympics here three years ago — took a gamble that paid off to earn himself his third world indoor title ahead of the chasing pack.

He cleared 5.70m first go, then sat it out until 5.90 which he cleared only at the second attempt and only after rattling the bar.

That, however, was enough to beat Igor Potapovich of Kazakhstan (5.80) and South African Okkert Brits

and Andrej Tiwontshik of Germany, who tied for bronze (5.75).

Bubka said: "After the Olympics, this was special. I thought it was important for me to be here."

Dubbed the fastest white man on earth, Moen's win in 20.58secs ahead of Bermudan Troy Douglas (20.94) and Sebastian Keitel of Chile (20.98) was almost guaranteed when British world outdoor Silver medalist John Regis pulled out of the event on Saturday morning, fearing injury.

But the 25-year-old Norwegian, who won the European title last year when Regis pulled out yet again with injury, did at least have the consolation of beating the British sprinter in the semi-finals.

He said: "I wasn't that worried that Regis dropped out. If his hamstring was a problem, it was a smart move."

"My big year will come next year but there's a lot to do. I need to work on my acceleration and start to rival the best."

The 20-year-old El Guerrouj, in his first major competition, pushed the pace a long way out to finally demolish Cacho, who faded from second with 50m to go to finish a poor sixth.

The Moroccan, who won in 3min 44.54sec ahead of Mateo Canellas of Spain (3:44.85) and Eric Nedeau of the United States (3:44.91), had posted a warning earlier in the season at Grenoble when finishing behind Nouredine Morel.

Nobody, however, took that warning. Cacho, before the race, said he thought he was definitely the favourite and knew nothing about El Guerrouj except his age — which he announced, wrongly as it happens, as 23.

The winner said: "I knew Cacho has a good finish so I began my attack 600m out. I was afraid of him — but I had a feeling I could win."

Astafei, meanwhile, may not be such a new face but it was a new experience to represent Germany, who she has just qualified for after a bitter feud with the Romanian athletics federation.

The 25-year-old, beaten by her new teammate Heike



Ivan Pedroso of Cuba is airborne during the men's long jump final 11 March evening at the 5th World Indoor Athletic Championships in Barcelona. Pedroso set a new championship record by jumping 8.51 metres (AFP photo)

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A Q 8 2
A 6 5 4 2
3

WEST EAST
J 9 8 2 10 5 4 3
J 10 4 9 Q J 9 3
10 7 A Q 5 2 J 10 8 7

SOUTH
A Q
K 7 6 5 3
K 8
K 9 6 4

The bidding:
North East South West
1 Pass 1 Pass
3 Pass 4 NT Pass

Pass Pass Pass

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One line is to remove the remaining enemy fang, ending in dummy, then lead a club toward the king. If East has the ace, you can ruff a club, discard another on the king of

spades and claim your slam.

West produces the ace, but if diamonds are 3-3 all is still well. Unfortunately, they are not. Down one. Note that it doesn't help to draw only two rounds of trumps and then go after diamonds. West will score an overtrick for the setting trick.

Go to the head of the class if you won the ace of spades, called the queen of spades and king of diamonds, then entered dummy with the queen of hearts to discard a diamond on the king of spades! Now ruff a diamond low, cash the king of hearts and ace of hearts to draw trumps and ruff another diamond. That sets up a long card in dummy and your only loser is a club. There's still a trump on the table as an entry to cash your good diamond.



Britain's sprint star Linford Christie is surrounded by fans as he appears in the spectators area of the Palau Sant Jordi as a mere visitor of the 5th World Indoor Athletic Championships (AFP photo)

Henkel at the Barcelona Olympics, turned the tables by clearing 2.01m without a miss. Already assured of gold, she then tried to equal the championship record of 2.05 but missed out.

Henkel, back from having a baby last year, took bronze on countback behind European champion Slovenian Britta Bilac after both had cleared 1.99.

The other highlights came from 33-year-old Russian Yolanda Chen, who set a world indoor triple jump record of 15.03m to take gold, while reigning champion Ivan Pedroso of Cuba leapt 8.51 to win the men's long jump with the second-best indoor performance of all time.

Szabo, in her first indoor race since 1989, produced the perfect ambush on the final lap to time 8min 54.50sec after the American had done all the running.

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00		Author and Director: Mohammad Al Shawaqfeh Daily starting 8:30 p.m. Monday is the weekly holiday	The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155
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Major arrives in Israel promising more British help

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — British Prime Minister John Major arrived in Israel on Sunday, pledging to bolster bilateral ties and reinforce Mideast peace talks by strengthening economic bonds with the Jewish state.

Accompanying Mr. Major were 30 top British businessmen, among them representatives of companies that used to abide by an Arab boycott of Israel.

"Each and every one of them share my belief that even stronger economic and financial ties between Britain and Israel will strengthen the bonds that already unite us," Mr. Major told Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and cabinet ministers at a welcoming ceremony.

"I also believe that they can make a contribution to peace," Mr. Major added.

In interviews before his departure, Mr. Major suggested he would offer more financial aid to the ailing Palestinian self-rule government in Gaza when he meets Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat there on Tuesday.

Mr. Major told Israel radio that it was "very important to both sides in the peace process to know that countries around the world stand behind that process."

He said Britain was "prepared to play a part also in the economic and other aspects in ensuring the peace process can be carried forward," including behind-the-scenes contacts.

Israel's relations have been bumpy with Britain, which ruled the area before Israel was created in 1948. Mr. Major is only the second British premier to visit the Jewish state, after Margaret Thatcher, who came in May 1986.

Mr. Major made a point to define today's Israeli-British relations as "the warmest possible friendship."

In a conciliatory gesture, Mr. Major left home the Foreign Office official in charge of the Middle East, Douglas Hogg, who had plans to visit PLO headquarters in Jerusalem.

Israel opposes such a visit, and one of Mr. Hogg's deputies, Andrew Green, will

instead pay a "courtesy call" on PLO officials there on Tuesday.

Mr. Rabin said relations were "close and very friendly" and noted London's concern for the peace and security of Israel and the Middle East.

He also congratulated Mr. Major on the framework for peace in Northern Ireland before the two men went into talks at the Israeli premier's office.

Mr. Major said he wants to help improve conditions for the Palestinians and will officially hand over a fleet of 50 police patrol vehicles.

Britain is a major donor to the autonomy authority, providing \$120 million a year over and above its 16 per cent share of the \$600 million pledged by the European Union.

Mr. Major will go on to Amman on Tuesday and reconfirm "longstanding friendly relations" with Jordan in talks Wednesday with King Hussein and Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, a British official said.

Palestinian officials were buoyed by Mr. Major's promises of aid.

"We hope Major's visit will take this peace process one step forward," Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath said, referring to both the political and business aspects of the visit.

Only about \$200 million of a pledged \$2.4 billion over five years from donor countries have arrived in Gaza since last year. An Israeli official estimated the PLO deficit at \$300 million.

Israel radio estimated that Mr. Arafat's government was losing about \$1 million a day under a closure barring most Gaza workers — along with West Bank Palestinians — from entering Israel since a Jan. 22 suicide bombing that killed 21 Israelis.

According to the Maariv daily, Mr. Major last visited Palestinian turf as a member of parliament in 1982, when a stone whizzed by only inches from his head during a tour of the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

"I could have died there," he was quoted as saying.

Rabbani forces and Taliban locked in duel of artillery

KABUL (Agencies) — Afghan government jets and artillery pounded the Taliban militia base outside Kabul on Sunday after driving its forces and those of an opposition faction from the city, witnesses said.

Dozens of people were killed and wounded as Taliban militants slammed Kabul with rockets, Radio Kabul reported.

The broadcast said the militia fired an unspecified number of rockets, mainly from the western Khairabad district.

The radio, controlled by supporters of President Burhanuddin Rabbani, did not give details.

Earlier, sources in Kabul said the Afghan capital was subjected to one of the heaviest rocket attacks in recent weeks.

They said Taliban based at Dashedi Sakharu airstrip, formerly held by Hezbe-Islami of former Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, targeted Kabul's eastern suburbs.

Rockets also landed in the city's Wazir Akbar Khan district and areas close to the radio station, they said.

The attack followed Taliban's defeat in Saturday's fighting in the southwest part of the city at the hands of Mr. Rabbani's troops under the command of former Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud.

Rabbani troops, forcing another Taliban retreat Sunday, pushed into the foothills southeast of Kabul, the sources said.

A Defence Ministry spokesman told reporters the attack on the Charasyab base south of Kabul was intended to drive all government rivals out of rocketing distance of the capital.

Taliban, driven out of its newly-captured Karte Seh district in southwest Kabul, responded by launching dozens of rockets, most of which landed in Kabul's civilian districts, witnesses said.

Taliban is holding Shi'ite Hezbe-Wahdat party leader

Abdul Ali Mazari captive at Charasyab, a witness said on Sunday.

A Western journalist said he had photographed Mr. Mazari, bound hand and foot, at Charasyab on Saturday. No other details of Mr. Mazari's capture were immediately available.

Taliban fighters moved into positions held by Hezbe-Wahdat in Karte Seh on Wednesday after the Shi'ite militia came under attack from forces loyal to President Rabbani. Mr. Rabbani's forces captured Hezbe-Wahdat's former bastion in the Karte Seh on Saturday.

The fall of Karte Seh, completed overnight with the capture of a former Soviet Scud missile base nearby, consolidated Mr. Rabbani's grip on the capital.

It also handed the Taliban their first defeat, puncturing an aura of invincibility acquired by the new force as it swept through southeastern Afghanistan in the past few months.

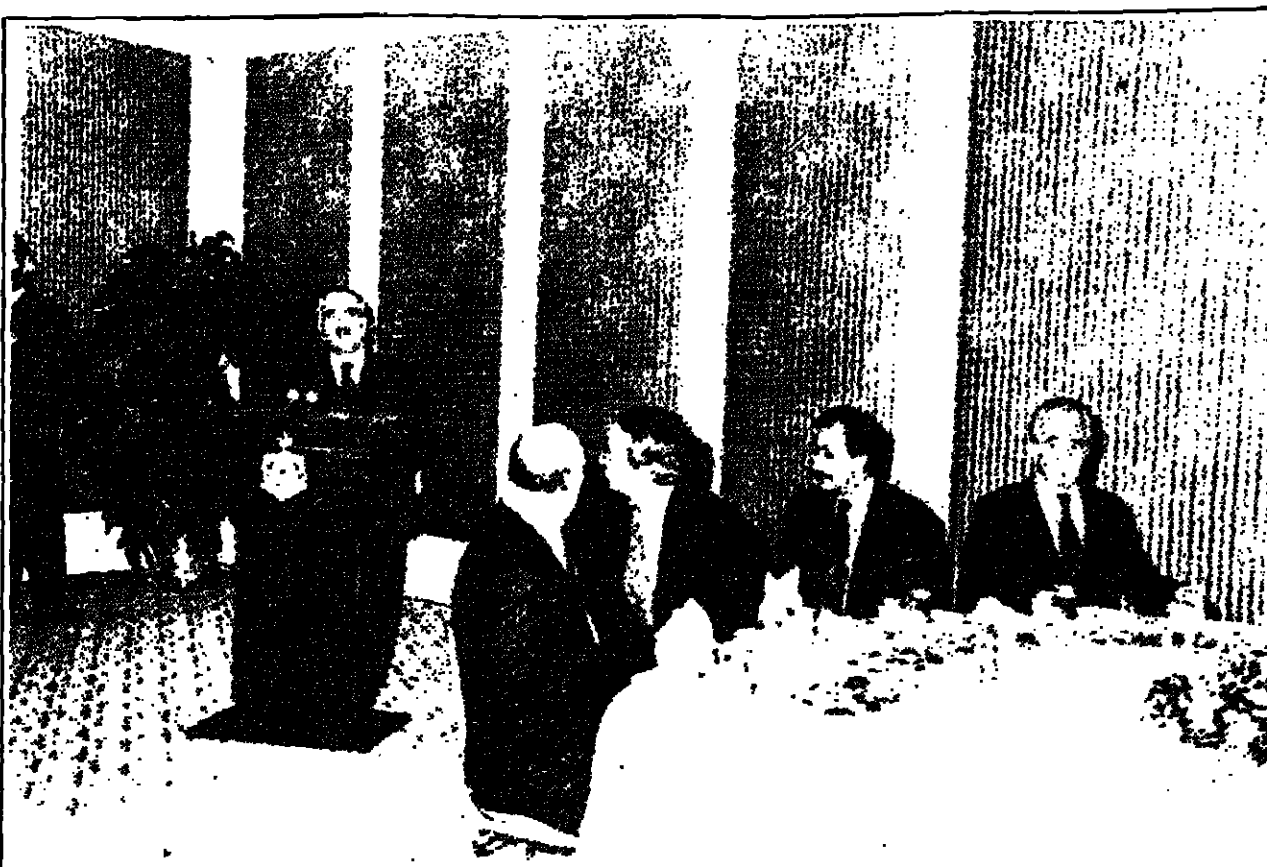
"Now we control the entire area and we are only mopping up," Defence Ministry spokesman Abdullah told reporters after the spectacular success of pro-Rabbani forces commanded by Mujahideen guerrilla leader Ahmad Shah Masoud.

Despite the boom of artillery Kabul was relatively quiet after Saturday's battle, the heaviest in six months.

There was no exact estimate of casualties. But the Red Cross hospital in Karte Seh said 74 of more than 721 casualties arriving there on Saturday had died. It said it had received 563 patients in the previous week of whom 27 had died.

A U.N. official expressed concern at the latest fighting, saying it made peace efforts more difficult.

"We call on all sides to stop the bloodshed and allow the peace process to move forward," Charles Santos, advisor to U.N. special envoy Mahmoud Mesiri, told Reuters in Kabul.



SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sunday addresses a Socialist International meeting in Amman attended by Israeli Foreign Minister

Shimon Peres (right), Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and other officials (see page one) (Petra photo)

Newspapers say government move not enough to defray newsprint cost hike

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Newspaper establishments said Sunday a government move to exempt half of their newsprint imports from customs duties was not enough to compensate for the rise in international prices and called for total exemption of newsprint from all customs duties and other charges.

The government, meanwhile, appeared to be having second thoughts on a stipulation that a general sales tax of seven per cent would be applicable on newsprint as announced in a cabinet decision late Saturday.

Finance Minister Basel Jarad indicated that the government might continue to exempt newsprint from sales tax, which is levied at the point of entry to the Kingdom.

"The issue needs closer study," the minister told the Jordan Times, implying that there might have been an oversight in the decision.

The general sales tax law, adopted in 1994, clearly exempts newsprint from the levy. As such, it was expected that the exemption would

continue after the government reviews the issue.

But, as far as newspapers' demand for total exemption from customs duties and other charges as concerned, said Mr. Jarad, "we are giving them 50 per cent tax holiday on customs duties on newsprint. And that is that."

The cabinet decision to extend partial exemption from the 25 per cent customs duties to newsprint came after the newspaper establishments announced that they were planning to increase advertising charges by 25 per cent and hike the cost of dailies — three Arabic language newspapers and the Jordan Times — by 50 fils to 200 fils with effect from April 1.

The offer of exemption was coupled with a government condition that there will not be any raise in newspaper prices and the proposed increase in advertisement charges will not be applicable to government advertisements.

"This is simply not enough," said Mohammad Al Amad, director-general of the Jordan Press Foundation Company Limited, which publishes Al Rai and the

Jordan Times.

"A simple calculation indicates that we face an additional burden of \$3.5 million per year as a result of the 120 per cent increase in newsprint prices," said Mr. Amad, noting that prices had risen from \$450 a tonne in May 1994 to about \$1,100 in January.

Exempting half of the Jordan Press Foundation's annual 7,000 tonnes of imports of newsprint from customs duties would mean a reduction of about \$875,000 of the amount that the company pays to the government every year.

"That is not compatible with the rise in the newsprint prices," noted Mr. Amad. "Even if the government gives us full exemption from all customs duties and other charges, we will still be shouldering the dramatic increase in newsprint cost."

In addition, he said in a reference to the imposition of sales tax on newsprint, "the government is giving by one hand and taking it away by the other."

Mr. Amad was speaking before he was informed of Finance Minister Jarad's view that the issue of sales tax needed further study.

Mr. Amad, whose Al Rai is the largest-circulation Arabic language daily in Jordan, said he was seeking a meeting with Mr. Jarad to present him with the actual situation as far as newspapers in Jordan are concerned.

Mustafa Abu Libdeh, chief editor of Al Aswaq daily, said that "things were fundamentally wrong" in the government approach to newspapers in Jordan.

"We, the press in Jordan, are performing our role as the fourth estate by being in the right places in the right times with the right quantities with the right message," said Mr. Abu Libdeh. "In the process we are suffering losses while we get little support from the government."

Mr. Abu Libdeh cited the case of many Third World countries where governments actually support the press through exemptions from charges for infrastructure such as power, water and telecommunications in a bid to help the newspapers to enlighten the masses. In some countries, governments subsidise newsprint.

"Here in Jordan they give

(Continued on page 7)

Muslims fight Israel's plans in Jerusalem

CAIRO (AP) — Arab and Muslim officials urged their countries Sunday to confront Israel's steps to keep control of East Jerusalem and warned that Israel's "annexation" of the Holy City would spark more Middle East wars.

Speakers at a symposium titled "Jerusalem, A City of Peace," sponsored by the Arab League and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), also urged foreign countries not to move their embassies in occupied Jerusalem.

Esmat Abdul Meguid, the Arab League's secretary-general, complained of Israel's deliberate plans to "impose a de facto situation" by annexing Arab land in the city and building more Jewish settlements. He said this could never lead to peace.

"We stress the importance of a comprehensive and lasting solution by returning East Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty," he said in an opening speech.

Delegates taking part in the discussions — officials and church leaders from some 30 countries — are expected to recommend to their governments ways of ending Israel's occupation of Arab East Jerusalem.

The two groups sponsoring the two-day symposium want to highlight Jerusalem's Arab history and counter Israel's planned celebration next year of what it calls Jerusalem's 3,000 years as a Jewish capital.

Pope Shenouda III, head of Egypt's Coptic Christian Church, noted that the Israeli view ignored some 13 centuries of Islamic control.

"The continuation of the Israeli violations in the Arab territories and the Judaisation of Jerusalem is a provocative act which could break down the peace process," Morocco's King Hassan II said in a message sent to the symposium.

King Hassan is head of the OIC's Jerusalem Committee.

The Palestinian foreign affairs spokesman, Farouk Kaddoumi, called Jerusalem "the umbilical cord of the world" said it was an international issue that could not be decided by one country alone.

Blasts kill one in Algeria; women kidnapped, tortured

ALGIERS (AFP) — A string of new bomb attacks in the Algiers region killed at least one person and wounded three, while presumed Islamic extremists have kidnapped several women, torturing at least two, Algerian newspapers said Sunday.

A bomb in the Islamic fundamentalist stronghold of Larbaa, 35 kilometres southeast of the capital, wounded three people Friday night, the daily Al Watan said.

At Reghaia, 30 kilometres east of Algiers, a man was burned alive when a bomb exploded, setting fire to his home, the paper said.

Two other bombs exploded at the Regata School in Reghaia, and in the southern Algiers suburb of Ain Naadja, but left no casualties, the paper said.

Unconfirmed reports

meanwhile spoke of two other bomb attacks, targeting a town hall and a bridge in the Algiers region Saturday night.

The violence came less than 24 hours after a bomb wounded 63 people at a police housing complex in an Algiers suburb.

By Sunday the bombing had still not been claimed, however it occurred the same day as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) threatened to target women close to the security forces unless the government released jailed "women believers."

On Saturday the Tribune newspaper, generally well-informed on militant groups, attributed the attack to the Jordan fanatic of the factions grouped under the GIA.

The group is headed by 32-year-old Lounes Bahloul,

known as Ayoub, who was sentenced to death in absentia for bombing Algiers airport in August 1992, killing nine people and leaving 126 wounded.

Meanwhile suspected Islamic extremists kidnapped several women on Wednesday, International Women's Day, in the mountainous Jijel region of eastern Algeria, about 250 kilometres east of Algiers, a renowned hotbed of Islamic guerrilla resistance, Le Matin newspaper said Sunday.

A 24-year-old woman seized by four armed men in Al Aouana was still missing Sunday, while in Texana, two schoolgirls aged 17 and 18 respectively were kidnapped by another armed group who tortured them and demanded they give up their studies.

In Tarkecht, villagers managed to stop armed men from kidnapping a young girl, but one villager was killed and another wounded by the group.

Police called to the village killed all the would-be kidnappers, the paper added.

On March 8, the group Algerian Rally for Democratic Women marked women's day by holding a mock trial in Algiers of leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front, for crimes against humanity.

Feminists who have condemned the fundamentalists for killing, raping and torturing women have been accused by the Islamists in turn of supporting the junta.

Le Matin also reported that villagers near Tizart and Azzefoun, on the Kabylie coast, killed two armed Islamic extremists on Friday.

Armed extremists often

attack villages to steal hunting rifles, which most families in Kabylie have. They also attack villages for food.

* U.S. stops issuing visas

The U.S. consulate in Algiers said Sunday it has stopped distributing "non-immigrant" visas to Algerians, reducing the opportunities for a growing number of citizens wanting to flee the country.

The move brings the consulate in line with several other Western missions who have also scaled back their activities in view of the continuing violence in Algeria.

The measure, which took effect from Saturday, increased the sense of isolation felt by many Algerians looking for an escape route from a bloody conflict.

Amman workshop targets blood users

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A five-day workshop entitled "Inter-Country Workshop on Transfusion Medicine and the Appropriate Use of Blood, Blood Components and Blood Derivatives" opened Sunday at the Philadelphia Hotel.

Hani Oueis, Secretary General of the Ministry of Health who spoke on behalf of the Minister of Health Aref Batayneh, said that the workshop was dealing with a very important issue.

"The blood transfusion issue is important to human lives because transfusion of blood requires responsibility from institutions and people who work in the field," said Dr. Oueis, adding that the demand for blood transfusion increased with the advancement of technology.

Dr. Oueis told the representatives of 14 countries attending the workshop that the first blood institution was formally opened in Jordan in 1975, and since then "we

have 28 national blood banks."

Mohammad Najeh, regional advisor of health laboratory services and transfusion medicine at the Eastern Mediterranean Office of the World Health Organisation (WHO), delivered a speech on behalf of Hussein Jaza'iri, the regional director of the WHO. He said that no real development in transfusion medicine can be expected without the active participation of both providers and users, and this "workshop addresses the users."

"This workshop is the bridge of both users and providers and all countries will present its case and discuss their experiences through working groups," he said.

Dr. Najeh said inappropriate use of blood was widespread in several countries.

"Many patients have received blood when they did not need it. Quite often blood and blood products are transfused where alternative therapy is indicated," Dr. Najeh said.

Dr. Najeh pointed that in

countries of the Middle East, most of the blood is transfused without separation into components, while in most developed countries more than 50 per cent of the blood collected is transfused as components.

He also said that most countries in the region import blood products, as they lack facilities for plasma fractionation.

"The concept of blood component therapy provides the optimal method of transfusing patients with a specific blood component, and one donated unit can benefit several patients," he explained.

Dr. Najeh called on participants to take the necessary measures to ensure the appropriate use of blood, blood components and blood products.

"There are great hopes that the outcome of the workshop will lead to the application of necessary measures to ensure the rational and appropriate use of blood, blood components and blood products in your countries."

Dr. Najeh told the participants.

Janet Merza, director of the National Blood Bank of Jordan, who is also the temporary advisor to the WHO, said the workshop was one in a series the WHO is that conducting in Jordan and many other workshops have been coordinating in Jordan since 1989.

According to Dr. Merza, all previous workshops were designated for blood bankers but this one is for users.

"The workshop will hopefully improve the quality service for patients and for component therapy and we could benefit from blood fractionation," Dr. Merza told the Jordan Times.

According to Dr. Merza, the blood could be divided into four parts — packed cells, plasma, cryoprecipitate and platelets, and those could be given to four or more patients.

She said that in Jordan 65 per cent of the blood collected is divided into components. She said the workshop will tackle other issues

including plasma substitute IV fluids which can be used instead of the blood in case of emergencies.

At the end of the workshop, she said, guidelines for the appropriate use of blood and blood products and fractions will be adopted and implemented in all countries in the region for blood users.

The overall objective of the conference is to review the current trends in transfusion medicine and establish a criteria for effective and transfusion practices.

Moreover, the objectives include establishing a current pattern of blood usage in the region, identifying the essential blood products in use and defining alternatives and proper guidelines for use of various products.

The workshop, organised by the Ministry of Health and the WHO, is attended by representatives of Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Marrakesh, Pakistan, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and the Palestinian National Authority.

COLUMN

Anonymous donor seeks to save leukaemia girl

LONDON (AFP) — An anonymous donor has agreed to finance last-chance treatment for a ten-year-old leukaemia victim who refused further treatment, the victim's father, lawyer said Saturday.

The father had accepted £75,000 (\$120,000) toward the treatment. An earlier report said a Sunday tabloid newspaper, the News of the World, had offered to pay for the treatment in full. The case of "Little B", the subject of two contradictory court rulings Friday, had mobilised tabloid newspapers and a major businessman bid to fund last-chance treatment, which Cambridge Health Authority deemed too expensive when weighed with the girl's poor chance of survival. The Daily Mirror and the Sun newspapers had also proposed to meet the costs of the treatment, which includes chemotherapy and a second-bone-marrow transplant. Mohammad Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, London's most exclusive department store, offered to help. The girl's last-minute treatment is due to start Monday at specialist Dr. Peter Gravett's private London clinic. "She may only have a ten per cent chance of survival but while the chance is there we should take it and treat her," the doctor told reporters. Dr. Gravett was contacted by the girl's father after the case-strapped Cambridge Health Authority's decision to no longer treat the girl because it rated her chances of survival as poor and said the money could be better spent on other patients.

Germans donate 33 paintings to Russia

SAINT PETERSBURG, Russia (AFP) — German collectors Irene and Peter Ludwig have donated 33 masterpieces of modern art to the Russian Museum here, including canvases by Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, the couple said Saturday. Peter Ludwig, opening an exhibition of Picasso paintings loaned by the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, said the gifts, shown alongside the Picassos, were "a sign of good will on behalf of Germans." Russia and Germany are embroiled in a dispute over works of art which the Red Army looted from Germany at the end of World War II. Their existence was kept a closely guarded secret until the end of Soviet rule in 1991. Sixty-three of the works are currently on show at Moscow's Pushkin Museum and another 74, mainly French Impressionist paintings, are due to open at the Hermitage Museum here on March 30. The approximately 170 Ludwig Picassos which went on show here Saturday mark the first time in more than 40 years that Saint Petersburg — formerly Leningrad — has hosted a show exclusively dedicated to Picasso. The Russian Museum is Russia's second largest museum in terms of its contents, but is little known abroad due to being overshadowed by the prestigious nearby Hermitage, which is the largest.

Vandals scratch 4 Dutch masters in Hermitage

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) — Four paintings by Dutch masters in the Hermitage Museum were scratched by unidentified vandals, but the damage only affected the varnish, a museum official said Friday.

Larisa Korabelnikova, spokeswoman for the St. Petersburg Museum, said the paintings were vandalised last week, and have already been repaired and returned to the exhibit hall. "Fortunately, it was only the varnish that was scratched," she said. "The paintings themselves remained intact." Ms. Korabelnikova said the museum is planning to protect all its paintings in the future with a special non-reflective glass. The Hermitage will also post additional guards in the halls of Dutch art, which hold some of the museum's most popular paintings. St. Petersburg police are investigating the crime.

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